



BOOK 3 OF THE COILING DRAGON SAGA

WO CHI XI HONG SHI (我吃西红柿)

TRANSLATED BY REN WOXING

BARUCH RISING

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Prologue

Linley had survived the pursuit and the onslaught of the Radiant Church, but not without loss. Grandpa Doehring was forever gone, a tragedy which he would perhaps never get over. But in the process, Linley has grown powerful, and he now has powerful friends - Zassler, the Barker brothers, and even an enigmatic king of killers. He arrives at Channe, finally ready to openly meet his beloved little brother...

Part I

His Fame Shakes the World

1

A Powerful Supporter

Linley and Wharton had been separated for nearly seventeen years.

Seventeen years ago, shortly after the Yulan festival of that year, Wharton had left the town of Wushan by the side of Housekeeper Hiri and headed towards the distant O'Brien Empire. At that time, Linley was only ten while Wharton was six. The two brothers had been very innocent and knew so little about the outside world. Back then they were supported by Hogg, who had protected them like an old hawk looking after its chicks.

But now, Hogg was long dead. Of the two brothers, one was a count of the O'Brien Empire, while the other possessed the terrifying power of the Saint level.

Within the count's manor. Linley, Wharton, Housekeeper Hiri, Hillman, Nader, the Barker brothers, Zassler, Jenne, Rebecca, and Leena were all gathered together in front of two rectangular tables covered with wine and food.

Wharton and Linley were engaged in conversation regarding what had happened in recent years. Although Wharton had gotten general information regarding Linley from the Dawson Conglomerate, when he personally chatted with Linley, he couldn't help but grow anxious as he listened. *So close!* His Big Brother had come so close to dying.

"During those three years of training in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, followed by the six years of training in the Northwest Administrative Province, I engaged in several dangerous battles, yes, but in the end I arrived without suffering any major harm." Linley laughed. "In the past, I was worried about the Radiant Church. But now? Although I don't have the power to raid their headquarters yet, I have more than enough power to protect myself."

The Radiant Church had been established in the Yulan continent for many years now. For it to be on par with the O'Brien Empire as one of the premier

powers of the Yulan continent, it definitely had a terrifying amount of hidden power. From the fact that the War God's College was able to send out three personal disciples who were all at the Saint level, one could determine that the Radiant Church must surely have quite a number of Saints of its own.

"Big Bro, you, you've reached the Saint level?" Wharton was shocked and excited. Wharton knew how difficult training could be. Although he himself had an extremely high density of dragonblood in his veins, he was still only of the eighth rank, and even in dragonform was only at the peak of the ninth rank.

The density of the dragonblood in Linley's veins was lower than in his own, but for Linley to be able to claim that he had more than enough power to protect himself surely meant that Linley had reached the Saint level. "After dragonforming, I indeed am at the Saint level," Linley said with a smile.

Hillman and Housekeeper Hiri, seated at the same table, exchanged glances, excitement in their eyes. Housekeeper Hiri's voice was hoarse with excitement. "I've taken care of three generations of Baruch clan members now. The Baruch clan has finally produced a Saint."

Saints were simply on a whole different level. If a clan had a Saint in it, as long as that Saint-did not die, then the clan would never decay or weaken.

"Wharton." Linley looked at Wharton. "When I was in the Northwest Administrative Province, I paid attention to your affairs. It seems that you and the Seventh Imperial Princess..."

Wharton nodded honestly. "It's true, Big Brother. I truly wish to marry Nina, but right now, the situation is very complicated. Right after Caylan gave up his pursuit of her, Blumer appeared."

On the road over, Linley had already learned of this issue. After all, right now, there are many rumors regarding Wharton, Nina, and Blumer. "Blumer. I've heard people in the streets of the imperial capital discussing Blumer. He seems to be the personal disciple of the War God, and is the younger brother of Olivier." Linley smiled calmly.

Wharton nodded, a hint of worry appearing in his brows again. "Big Bro, you don't understand how famous Olivier is within the O'Brien Empire. Olivier is simply too powerful, terrifyingly powerful. Nine years ago, he already possessed

the power of a peak-stage Saint-level. And now... who knows how powerful he has become?”

Linley patted Wharton on the shoulders. “Wharton, don’t inflate the deeds of others and downplay your own abilities.” Wharton nodded.

Housekeeper Hiri sighed emotionally. “Young master Linley, you’ve never lived in the imperial capital. Perhaps you don’t fully understand how influential the War God’s College is. Even the Emperor himself would be extremely courteous to the personal disciples of the War God’s College. The personal disciples of the War God have an extremely exalted status.”

Hillman said seriously, “After all, there have been over a hundred generations of Emperors since the War God founded the Empire. Many of the Emperors in the history of the Empire have never even met the War God. But the personal disciples of the War God? They are qualified to meet him. Tell me, who does the War God care more about?”

Linley now understood. This was a good point. A hundred-plus generations had passed since the War God’s appearance. Although the War God was Johann’s ancestor, who knew how many descendants the War God had after five thousand years? How much affection would the War God truly have for each individual descendant of his over the past hundred generations?

Just judging from the fact that many Emperors had never even met the War God, one could tell what the answer to that question was. In contrast, personal disciples were different. The War God would even personally instruct them.

“It isn’t that I’m inflating the deeds of others. It’s that I truly am not confident.” Wharton was frustrated. “I really don’t know what I’ll do if Nina ends up being given to Blumer.” Wharton truly could not accept this result.

“Fuck his granny, if the Emperor dares to do such a thing, then we bros will go over and abduct the princess and bring her over to be your woman,” Gates immediately said.

The entire hall immediately grew silent. Wharton stared at Gates in shock, then looked at Linley. “Big Bro, who is this?” Only now did Linley come to his senses. He had been so excited at his reunion with his little brother that he had focused on chatting with him, and had totally forgotten to introduce Zassler and

the others.

“Haha...” Linley rose to his feet. “Wharton, let the servants leave first. The attendants outside can leave as well.” Linley was about to introduce these people in his group to Wharton. There was no need to hide anything from one of his own.

“Understood.” Although Wharton didn’t know what Linley wanted to talk about, he immediately followed Linley’s instructions and dismissed the servants and attendants.

Linley first walked in front of Jenne, Rebecca, and Leena. Sighing with emotion, he said, “Wharton, in the past, our mother was abducted by the Radiant Church precisely because her soul was pure. Rebecca and Leena had been abducted for the same reason.” Hearing these words, Wharton felt an emotional resonance in his heart.

“When I was in the Northwest Administrative Province, I rescued them. This one is Jenne. Wharton, you need to treat these three girls as you would a big sister or little sister,” Linley instructed. Wharton nodded.

“As for this gentleman...” Linley walked towards Zassler. Actually, whenever Wharton and the others looked at Zassler, they felt their hearts tremble. His thin, skeletal body and his dark green eyes caused fear in the hearts of whoever saw him.

“This is Zassler, an Arch Magus necromancer of the ninth rank. He is the oldest member of my group, and is already over eight hundred years old.”

Linley’s words caused Wharton, Housekeeper Hiri, Hillman, and Nader to all be astonished. Necromancer? This was a legendary type of magus. And an Arch Magus necromancer at that? It was far harder for a magus to advance than a warrior, due to the high requirement for spiritual energy. By contrasts, warriors didn’t require much spiritual energy.

The spiritual energy of a magus of the eighth rank was generally greater than that of a Saint-level warrior. Although Saint-level warriors possessed extremely tough and durable spiritual energy, in terms of volume, a magus of the same rank would possess a hundred times the amount of spiritual energy, if not more.

“Eight hundred years old? As I recall, a person’s maximum lifespan is only five hundred years, unless he reaches the Saint level,” Housekeeper Hiri suddenly said. Saints had an essentially unlimited lifespan, but humans who did not reach the Saint level couldn’t live for more than five hundred years.

“Haha...” Zassler’s ancient voice rang out. “You are referring to normal people. Let enlighten you. Those magi who train in the three ultimate types of magic – Oracular Magic, Life Magic, and Necromantic Magic – all live extremely long lives. Of the three, we necromancers possess the longest lifespan.”

Zassler glanced with an evil look at the group. “If one of you were about to die from old age, you can come find me. Given my relationship with Linley, I can help you transform your body into a zombie-body and allow you to never perish.”

Never perish? This was the goal of countless people. But a zombie-body? Just from the sound of it, one could guess that it must be one which belonged to an undead being. Wharton, Housekeeper Hiri, and Hillman all squeezed out a smile. They really were rather nervous in dealing with an Arch Magus necromancer.

“Zassler.” Linley looked unhappily at Zassler.

Zassler’s eyes flashed with green light as he laughed, “I’m just teasing your little brother and his friends. Transforming a body into a zombie-body isn’t an easy task either.”

Linley shook his head, then walked over to Barker and his brothers.

“It’s finally our turn.” Gates intentionally puffed out his chest. Wharton’s eyes lit up as well. All five of the brothers were as tall as Wharton, and they were much more muscular than him. Those long-handled greataxes in particular clearly were extremely heavy weapons.

“Wharton, have you heard of the Armand clan?” Linley looked at his younger brother.

“The Armand clan? Can it be... the Undying Warrior clan?” Wharton’s eyes lit up.

Linley nodded with satisfaction. “Right. Barker, Ankh, Hazer, Boone, Gates.

These five brothers are the descendants of the Armand clan, and all five of them are Undying Warriors.”

“All five of them are Undying Warriors?” Wharton was shocked. Next to him, Hiri and Hillman were stunned as well.

Being a descendant of the Armand clan and being an Undying Warrior were totally different concepts. For example, although Hogg was a descendant of the Dragonblood Warrior clan, he himself wasn’t a Dragonblood Warrior. It was very rare that one of the Supreme Warrior clans would produce a genius actually capable of transforming into a Supreme Warrior.

“Right.” Linley nodded. Seeing the astonished look on Wharton’s face, the five brothers felt extremely proud.

“The Armand clan had fallen on extremely hard times, and even their ‘Secret Undying Manual’ had been lost. Fortunately, Lord Cesar helped out,” Linley said gratefully. “Wharton, amongst these five brothers, Barker, Ankh, and Gates have already reached the ninth rank of power. The other two are at the peak of the eighth rank.”

“Ninth rank!” Wharton was frightened when he heard this. “Big Bro, are you saying that...?”

“Right. After transforming, all three of them have the power of Saints.” Linley smiled.

Wharton, Hillman, Housekeeper Hiri, and Nader’s hearts were filled with a hot gush of excitement. They were already very excited upon learning that Linley possessed the Saint level of power, but who would’ve expected that three more Saint-level combatants would have popped up?

Four Saint-level combatants! What a terrifying force this was. This was a very strong reason for them to feel confident indeed! Wharton had been worrying about how he would go about competing against Blumer. Now that his big brother had come with this group of people, Wharton felt like a beggar who had suddenly acquired a trillion gold coins.

“Lord Hogg, can you see this? Can you see this?” Hillman repeated emotionally. If Hogg was still present, he would definitely be ecstatic upon

witnessing this.

“Wharton, this is a magical beast that I tamed in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. His name is Haeru. Greet everyone, Haeru,” Linley said with a laugh.

The Blackcloud Panther that had been lying on the ground stood up. He swept Wharton and the others with his cold, dark eyes, and then spoke in the human tongue. “Haeru pays his respects to you all.”

Wharton stared at Linley in astonishment. “Big Brother, this magical beast, this magical beast just...”

“Right. Saint-level magical beast.” Linley nodded.

The throats of Wharton, Hillman, Hiri, and Nader all clenched. Good heavens. Magical beasts, by their very nature, were stronger than humans of the same level. Generally, only peak-stage Saint-level human experts would be able to defeat any Saint-level magical beasts. Linley was a Saint? Fine. But his magical beast was one as well?

“Hrmph.” A cold sneer could be heard. Wharton and the others all turned upon hearing it. The sound came from Bebe, who was seated next to Linley. Bebe’s head was arrogantly raised.

“Bebe.” Seeing Bebe’s familiar figure, Wharton felt very close to him. After all, Bebe had been with Linley early on. When they were young, Wharton had often played around with Bebe as well. “Bebe, how does it feel to be travelling alongside a Saint-level magical beast? You must really worship him, right?”

Bebe stared at Wharton, then said loudly, “Wharton, you stinking little punk! What sort of magical beast do you take me to be? That fellow Haeru... even as a Saint, he isn’t a match for me, Bebe!”

“Aaaah!” Wharton and the others had shocked expressions on their faces, as though they had seen a ghost. They could accept that this mysterious panther was a Saint-level magical beast, but Bebe? They had all watched as Bebe had first followed Linley when they were young. That adorable little Shadowmouse had actually reached the Saint level as well.

“Bebe is indeed stronger than me,” the Blackcloud Panther, Haeru, once more

growled in the human tongue. Bebe raised his little head high, his eyes filled with self-delight.

A Breakthrough in Spiritual Energy

Six Saint-level experts was simply too shocking. Only after a long time did Wharton and the others finally calm down from their manic excitement. But even after calming down, their hearts were still filled with boundless joy.

They had been worrying this entire time about what to do about Wharton and Nina. Blumer's status as the personal disciple of the War God and the younger brother of Olivier was giving them a huge amount of pressure. But now, they felt complete confidence in their ability to contend.

Wharton's face was radiant with smiles. His older brother had brought this many powerful experts. Wharton could almost visualize the scene of his marriage with Nina. "Big Bro, thanks. Cheers." Wharton raised his wine cup. Laughing, Linley raised his own as well.

Wharton had worshipped Linley, ever since he was young. A magus coming out of the town of Wushan who was accepted to the Ernst Institute was already something incredible. But now, a scant seventeen years later, Linley actually was in possession of two Saint-level magical beasts and was followed by three Saint-level experts.

"Big Bro, in a few more days, it'll be the Yulan festival again. You are almost twenty-seven years old by now. When are you planning to get married?" Wharton leaned over and whispered into Linley's ear while snickering.

"You punk." Linley laughed. "Let's not discuss this issue for now."

"Oh." Wharton nodded obediently. Although Wharton was now an Imperial Count and was a huge man who stood 2.2 meters high, in front of Linley, he still acted the same as he did when they were young. "Actually, Leena and the other girls are all quite good," Wharton whispered secretly. Linley gently smacked Wharton upside the head.

"I'll stop, I'll stop. Let's drink, let's drink," Wharton said hurriedly.

Housekeeper Hiri and Hillman, seeing Linley and Wharton chat like this, felt boundless joy in their hearts. Exchanging glances, they began laughing together.

Linley and his little brother were extremely happy in those first few days of Linley's arrival. However, Linley had instructed Wharton that although it was fine to reveal the news of himself and Haeru being at the Saint level, for now the news that Bebe and three of the Barker brothers had reached the Saint level as well must be hidden.

Barker, his brothers, and Bebe were an important hidden force for Linley. In addition, in the entire O'Brien Empire there was virtually none who knew that Barker and his brothers were Undying Warriors. Thus, maintaining this secret was easy. Just the presence of two Saint-level combatants, Linley and Haeru, was already enough to cause dread in the hearts of others.

Year 10008 of the Yulan calendar. December 30th. This was the day before the Yulan festival. It was snowing on this day, and the entire O'Brien Empire was covered with snow, as the entire world seemed to turn white.

Boulder Street. Count Wharton's training grounds. Although the snow was flying about, Linley still sat in the meditative position in the middle of the grass. As for Wharton, such a powerful man as himself wouldn't care about snow.

"Whoosh." Wharton's bare upper body was brimming with power and heat. He put down the warblade 'Slaughterer' to one side, preparing to take a rest. But just as he turned to look at the nearby Linley...

"Hrm?" Wharton found to his astonishment that although the snow was flying everywhere, whenever any snow approached Linley it would 'avoid' him, passing by him in a circular line. It was as though there was an invisible tornado around Linley. Not a single snowflake had fallen onto Linley's clothes. "What's this?" Wharton was a bit shocked.

Linley, who had been meditating, suddenly opened his eyes. "Wharton, what are you looking at?" Although Linley had been in deep meditation, when someone paid attention to him, Linley would notice.

"Big Bro, that snow... how? Could this be the 'impose' level mentioned in our clan's records?" Wharton said in astonishment.

Smiling, Linley said, “Wharton, once you reach the level of ‘impose’, it is true that you can prevent the rain or the snow from landing on your body. However, this requires that you whole-heartedly concentrate on utilizing the ‘imposing force’ of the surrounding area. It is impossible to do this at the ‘impose’ level while one is meditating and not focusing on it.”

Just then, Linley hadn’t been intentionally preventing the snowflakes from reaching him. However, all it took was a thought and the snowflakes couldn’t come near him.

“What lies beyond the ‘impose’ level, then?” Wharton truly admired his Big Brother from the bottom of his heart. Wharton had trained hard for so many years, and had received the finest instruction from the O’Brien Academy, but to date, Wharton had only reached the ‘wielding something heavy as though it were light’ level as described in his clan’s records.

Actually, there was no need for Wharton to be too modest. The reason why Linley had been able to make such astonishing improvements, aside from his natural talent, was the fact that he was greatly assisted by his exceptional elemental essence affinity.

To ordinary people, elemental essence affinity only represented that one would be able to gather mageforce faster. But to experts, it represented that one would more easily be able to attune with nature, and understand the Laws of the world.

“This is part of the ‘Profound Truths of the Wind’ which I have gained insight into.” Linley laughed calmly. “This is just a simple application of it.”

“The Profound Truths of the Wind?” Wharton’s eyes lit up.

“Continue with your training,” Linley said, then closed his eyes again, returning to his meditations. Actually, nowadays Linley didn’t spend too much time on his stone sculpting, unless he was seized by a sudden desire. When that desire came, Linley would easily enter the correct state of mind and the benefits to him would be better.

These days, the effects of normal stone sculpting were about the same as Linley simply meditating. The reason was that at this point, given Linley’s understanding of the Laws of the Wind and the Laws of the Earth, when Linley

meditated he could easily become one with nature, giving him essentially the same benefits as he had when sculpting under normal conditions.

This sort of meditation on the various Laws was also helping to improve Linley's spiritual energy at a constant rate of growth.

Nightfall. Linley, who had been quietly meditating this entire time, suddenly revealed a hint of a smile on his previously expressionless face. His lips moved slightly. A moment afterwards...

"Swish!" Linley, who had been seated, suddenly moved at a terrifyingly fast speed. At the same instant, nine different Linley's suddenly seemed to appear at different locations of the training ground.

After the nine blurred images disappeared, Linley once again appeared seated in the meditative position in the training grounds. Only now did Linley open his eyes. "The ninth-ranked wind-style 'Windshadow' spell, famed as the most powerful speed-enhancing spell, lives up to its name. It can actually allow me, in my human form, to reach the speed of a Saint."

That's right! It had been a spell of the ninth rank!

Roughly a year and a half after Linley had entered the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, he had reached the eighth rank as a magus. But the amount of spiritual energy required to advance from the eighth rank to the ninth rank as a magus was astonishing. Even the most brilliant of geniuses would require at least ten years.

But due to his constant meditating, Linley's spiritual energy had grown at a rapid rate. After spending just seven years, he had finally broken through and reached the level of an Arch Magus of the ninth rank.

"Tomorrow is the Yulan festival. The day before the Yulan festival, I reached the level of an Arch Magus, eh? Sheesh..." Linley felt extremely happy. Magi possessed extremely powerful attacks. If you gave a magus sufficient time, a magus could definitely use his spells to defeat a warrior of the same level. The wide area spells of magi were particularly astonishing.

"Tomorrow, I will be twenty-seven years old. A twenty-seven-year-old dual-element Arch Magus. This should be a first in history." A look of confidence was

on Linley's face.

How incredible. A twenty-seven year-old dual-element Arch Magus. This was a terrifying record that had never before appeared within the history of the Yulan continent. The previous record holder had reached the ninth rank and become an Arch Magus only after he had turned thirty.

“Wind magic includes the Savage Tornado spell, which can easily deal with an army of a hundred thousand soldiers. As for earth magic, the ‘Castle of Earth’ can be considered a large-scale defensive spell...” Linley had to admit that the more powerful a magus was, the more terrifyingly useful the battle applications of their magic became.

Magi also possessed very powerful one-on-one spells as well. “The ninth-ranked wind spell, ‘Void Extermination’. Reputedly, as long as one has enough mageforce, this is a single-target spell that can even kill Saint-level experts. It truly is monstrously powerful.” Linley couldn't help but sigh in praise.

Wind magic was very valiant and mighty. ‘Void Extermination’ was the most powerful attacking spell out of all spells of the ninth rank in every discipline. The ‘Dimensional Edge’ spell, in turn, was the most powerful attacking spell out of all forbidden-level spells.

The earth-style in turn was legendary for its defensiveness, whether in self-protection or in large-scale protection. When an earth-style magus of the ninth rank utilized the ‘Supergravity Field’ spell, he could cause the hearts and veins of other experts to explode and cause them to instantly die. After all, although some people had powerful muscles, their hearts and their blood vessels weren't necessarily that tough.

“However, to me, the most useful spell is still the Windshadow spell. The most powerful speed-supporting spell!” In his human form, Linley had less than half the speed he possessed in his Saint-level Dragonform. But by relying on the Windshadow technique, his speed in human form could rival his speed in Dragonform. How terrifying!



The day of the Yulan festival. The sun was bright and high in the sky, casting its glow on the snow-covered trees and rooftops, which gleamed dazzlingly. The entire imperial capital seemed to be much brighter than normal. On this day, the imperial capital was arranging large-scale celebrations as well.

Within a carriage. Watching the festivities, Wharton and Linley were sharing a carriage while chatting about Nina, and what to do about her.

“Wharton, in two days, bring me to visit the Emperor,” Linley said directly.

“Visit his Imperial Majesty?” Wharton stared at Linley in astonishment.

Linley said with a calm laugh, “I have no grudges against the O’Brien Empire. If the Emperor is willing to allow Nina to marry you, I wouldn’t mind settling down here in the O’Brien Empire.” Wharton looked at his older brother. In his heart, he understood what Linley was saying.

“But if that Emperor doesn’t know what’s good for him and insists on marrying the Seventh Princess to Blumer, then we’ll have to resort to our backup plan. We’ll abduct Nina and then the two of you can elope.” Linley looked at Wharton. “Wharton, are you ready to accept this result?”

Wharton was silent for a moment. “Of course I am. I don’t feel too great a sense of loyalty to the O’Brien Empire. But Nina...”

“The Seventh Princess would refuse?” Linley asked. This would be a major issue.

Wharton shook his head. “I know her. When I was competing against Caylan, Nina once said that if the Emperor really tried to force her, she would elope with me. But Nina is afraid that we wouldn’t be able to make it.”

“You don’t need to worry about that, unless the War God personally intervenes,” Linley said calmly. Linley knew that given the War God’s status, he wouldn’t get involved in these minor issues. Only if the Empire truly suffered a severe crisis would the War God show himself.

Normally speaking, the War God wouldn’t even get involved if an Emperor was assassinated. The War God had countless descendants. If one Emperor died, another would succeed him. As long as nothing threatening the entire foundation of the Empire occurred, the deity-like War God would not interfere.

Three days later, a carriage came to the gates of the imperial palace. A tall young man dressed in a gentleman's suit, alongside a young man dressed in a long black robe, stepped out of the carriage. "Count Wharton, who is this?" the gate guards asked. Given their keen eyes, they could clearly tell that the person next to Count Wharton was no ordinary individual.

With a calm laugh, Wharton said, "This is my older brother. I wish to take him to see his Imperial Majesty." The palace guards didn't make any difficulties for them, immediately allowing them in. Actually, it generally wasn't too difficult for one to be granted entry into the outer palace. Anyone with some status could bring people inside.

This was because the palace itself was enormous. If one wanted to enter one of the important areas of the palace, however, the guards would be much more restrictive, which was the case just a short while later. "Stop!" two new guards shouted. "Count Wharton, who is this person by your side?"

"Please send a message. This is my older brother, Linley. I am bringing my older brother to meet with his Imperial Majesty," Wharton said directly.

"Please wait here first," one of the guards shouted, before turning and running inside the courtyard. There were very many experts within this courtyard. Without the express permission of the Emperor, the various nobles did not dare to rashly barge in. A while later, that guard came running back. "His Imperial Majesty has permitted you to enter."

"There really are quite a few experts here." As Linley walked into the courtyard, he could easily sense the locations of one expert after another from the flows of the nearby wind elemental essence.

After walking for a while and taking some roundabout paths, they arrived at a classical, refined study room. "Your Imperial Majesty," Wharton called out in a loud voice.

"Haha, Wharton, I hear your big brother Linley has arrived? Come, quick!" Emperor Johann's clear and bright voice rang out from within the study.

Smiling, Linley stepped into the study.

Provocation

Emperor Johann had heard of Linley's fame long ago. Linley was the second most talented magus in all of history who had also reached the exalted rank of grandmaster sculptor at the age of sixteen. An absolute genius. When Johann had learned of Linley and his history, he couldn't help but sigh repeatedly with admiration.

He watched as Linley walked in. "He indeed appears to be a man of great talent," Johann sighed to himself. Be it in either his physical proportions or his reserved personality, Johann could tell that Linley did indeed have that unique aura of a grandmaster sculptor.

"Greetings, your Imperial Majesty," Linley bowed fractionally.

"How dare you!" the palace attendant next to Emperor Johann said in a shrill voice. "How dare you not kneel and kowtow before his Imperial Majesty?" Linley swept the attendant with his cold gaze. The palace attendant suddenly felt as though he was being stared at by a viper, and he couldn't help but shiver.

"A master artisan such as Linley is someone whom We have admired for a long time. Naturally, there is no need for him to kneel and pay any obeisance." Johann glanced at his nearby attendant, and the attendant no longer dared to speak.

In the O'Brien Empire, generally speaking, ministers needed to kneel on one knee before the Emperor. But people such as Blumer, a personal disciple of the War God, only needed to bow slightly.

"Wharton." Johann looked at Wharton, who stood next to Linley. "We have heard long ago that you had an older brother. Why is it that you have only brought him to see Us today?"

Wharton immediately said, "Your Imperial Majesty, your servant's older brother has only recently arrived in the imperial capital."

Emperor Johann nodded calmly, then looked at Linley. With a laugh, he said, “Master Linley, I heard that at the age of seventeen, you became a dual-element magus of the seventh rank. After ten years have passed, might I ask what level you have now reached?”

Linley smiled. “After ten years of painstaking training, just a few days ago I stepped past the gateway into the ninth rank.”

“An Arch Magus of the ninth rank?” Johann blinked.

“What?” A surprised shout from behind the Emperor. Linley casually glanced at the covering screen placed behind the Emperor’s seat. As soon as he had entered, Linley had known that there were two experts of the ninth rank hidden there, one a magus, one a warrior.

Johann glanced backwards as well. Knowing that they had revealed themselves, those two came forward. One was dressed in a loose, long magus robe, while the other was wearing a classic warrior’s outfit.

“These two are Our guards. They, too, were shocked at your advancement, Master Linley.” Johann laughed calmly.

“A dual-element Arch Magus. Linley, might I ask how old you are this year?” That silver-haired magus stared at Linley. As a magus, he naturally knew how incredibly difficult it was for one to increase one’s level of spiritual energy.

The historical records indicated that more than ten warriors had reached the Saint level in their twenties, but in all of history there was not a single Arch Magus who reached that rank before the age of thirty. The rate of advancement for spiritual energy was something that couldn’t be increased by any known means. It required one to slowly accumulate it, one step at a time.

“My older brother is twenty-seven years old this year,” Wharton said.

“Twenty-seven!” Hearing this number, that magus of the ninth rank had a very... amusing... look of shock on his face.

The historical tomes included the records of countless geniuses over tens of thousands of years. There were a few people who reached the ninth rank after the age of thirty, but that was ancient history. In the past few centuries, there hadn’t been a single person who had reached the ninth rank in their thirties.

But now...

“Twenty-seven. Twenty-seven!” That silver-haired old man laughed at himself. “I reached the rank of Arch Magus of the ninth rank when I turned 170 - and I thought I didn’t do too bad. But compared to you, Master Linley...” The silver-haired old man sighed, shaking his head. The difference was simply too extraordinary.

“Mr. Gerhaus, in the past, how old was the youngest magus to reach the ninth rank?” Johann immediately asked.

The silver-haired old man said respectfully, “Your Imperial Majesty, according to the historical records, the youngest Arch Magus was an absolute genius from over thirty thousand years ago. He reached the ninth rank at the age of thirty-two. In more recent history, from the beginning of the Yulan calendar to now, the youngest genius magus to reach the ninth rank did so at the age of thirty-five.”

In training battle-qi, if one possessed or acquired some special treasures, perhaps their battle-qi would be greatly enhanced. One’s level of understanding might suddenly jump as well from a flash of insight. There had been warriors who had become Saints in their twenties!

But spiritual energy wasn’t something that you could easily increase at will. Even by using the Straight Chisel School of stone sculpting, Linley had only gained that sudden breakthrough and increase a single time, when he was sixteen. In the past ten years, he had been slowly, painstakingly training nonstop. Only then had he managed to reach the ninth rank.

“I’ve heard that Master Linley isn’t just a magus. You are also a powerful warrior?” Emperor Johann smiled towards Linley.

Linley smiled calmly. “Your Imperial Majesty, you can have that person next to you give me a try.”

That warrior of the ninth rank pursed his lips. “Can it be that Master Linley is such a genius that you have reached the level of a warrior of the ninth rank as well?”

“Mr. Lancy, go ahead and give him a try. But you must be careful. Master

Linley is of the Dragonblood Warrior clan.” Johann laughed.

Mr. Lancy immediately drew his pitch-black broadsword. Linley only flipped his hand over, allowing Bloodviolet to appear in his palm. Against a warrior of the ninth rank, he didn’t even need to transform.

“Hrmph.” A layer of illusionary, stellar light seemed to suddenly cover the broadsword in Mr. Lancy’s hand. “Mr. Lancy is the student of the Stellar Sword Saint,” Johann explained.

Student of the Stellar Sword Saint? Linley wasn’t even concerned about the Stellar Sword Saint himself, much less his disciple.

Swish... The broadsword seemed to split apart the air itself, chopping against Linley with seemingly enormous power. Linley just stood there, not even moving. Bloodviolet flashed, and Mr. Lancy suddenly felt as though the entire world was filled with violet light, and that all the surrounding space had suddenly been locked and frozen.

“Bam!” The flat of Bloodviolet’s blade struck against Lancy, knocking him flying back and smashing against the stone screen. The screen split apart, and Lancy spat out a mouthful of blood as he fell to the ground.

Steadying himself with his hands against the floor, Lancy slowly rose to his feet. His eyes didn’t have a hint of arrogance in them. Instead, he said with gratitude, “Thank you for being merciful, Master Linley.” The flat of the blade had contained tremendous force when it struck against him. If it had been the edge of the blade, he definitely would have died.

“Of course. It was just a sparring match,” Linley said casually.

“Master Linley, you have already mastered the level of using the force of the heavens and the earth. My master once said that in order to reach the Saint level, one must first master this level. I am too far off from your level, Master Linley.” Lancy knew his own limits. When sparring against his master, he had previously experienced this sensation of the space around him having been frozen and locked.

Emperor Johann’s eyes narrowed. The Empire’s intelligence reports regarding the Dragonblood Warriors was quite detailed. If a Dragonblood Warrior was

able to reach the ninth rank in human form, then after Dragonforming that person would definitely be at the Saint level of power. If that person was able to reach the Saint level in human form, then in Dragonform he would definitely be invincible amongst Saint-levels.

The Saint level... Linley's status in Johann's mind was continuing to rise. "Haha... Master Linley, you truly are the most incredible genius that We have ever seen. Even Olivier cannot come close to competing with you." Johann laughed loudly.

As a warrior, Olivier perhaps was on par with Linley. But as a magus? Who could compete with him, the greatest genius in all of history? As a stone sculptor? Linley had been acclaimed as a grandmaster sculptor at the age of sixteen. Every aficionado of stone sculptures was filled with worship towards him.

It was very hard to reach the peak of any field. For someone to reach the peak of three fields... only the word 'genius' could be used to describe him.

"Your Imperial Majesty." Linley didn't want to waste any time with Johann. "I just recently arrived at the imperial capital. There are many things I don't understand too well regarding the affairs of the Empire. But I understand that my younger brother Wharton truly likes the Seventh Princess, Nina. In my capacity as the clan leader of the Baruch clan, I would like to ask you, your Imperial Majesty... if you would be willing to allow Nina to marry into the Baruch clan."

With Hogg's death, Linley had become the leader of the Baruch clan. Of course, this so-called clan only had two members to it.

"This..." Johann was put in a very difficult situation by Linley's sudden ambush. Linley was indeed a genius, and Johann's heart had been moved. There were quite a few Saint-level warriors in the O'Brien Empire. The War God's College alone had several. But Saint-level Grand Magi could be counted on one hand, and perhaps only a single one of them would obey the commands of the imperial clan.

Perhaps in one-on-one combat, Grand Magi were not exceptionally powerful, but in times of war they were incredibly dangerous. If a Grand Magus was to

directly cast a destructive forbidden-level spell over one's capital, how much damage would be caused? The million-man army that you painstakingly built up might be destroyed in an instant by a single forbidden-level spell such as the 'Annihilating Tempest'.

A dual-element Arch Magus at age twenty-seven... if someone were to tell Johann that a genius such as this wouldn't be able to reach the Saint level and become a Grand Magus, Johann most likely would curse out that person as being mentally retarded.

Such talent. The allure of a Saint-level Grand Magus was much higher than that of a Saint-level warrior. "Master Linley, please permit Us some time to consider it." Emperor Johann's attitude was incredibly friendly.

"My younger brother and I will respectfully await your Imperial Majesty's decision," Linley said with a calm laugh. "Then, your Imperial Majesty, I bid you farewell."

"Master Linley, why not enjoy a dinner with Us instead?" Emperor Johann hurriedly said.

"Thank you, your Imperial Majesty, for your kind offer. But I have other affairs to attend to," Linley said with a smile. A hint of disappointment was on Johann's face, but he didn't try to press the issue. Smiling, he said, "Next time, then."

Linley and Wharton walked out of the inner palace. Wharton was extremely excited. "Big Bro, I've never seen his Imperial Majesty be so humble before. Even facing Blumer, he had never been so modest."

"The O'Brien Empire has many Saint-level warriors but almost no Grand Magi." Linley laughed calmly. "Most likely, he values my talent in magic."

A twenty-seven year-old dual-element Arch Magus. Anyone who heard these words would be terrified out of their wits. Nobody could say for sure how terrifyingly powerful Linley would be in the future!

"Judging from the look on his Imperial Majesty's face, most likely he is beginning to consider things seriously. I've been in the Empire for quite some time, but I haven't heard of any Saint-level Grand Magi yet." Wharton sighed emotionally. The O'Brien Empire truly had too few Saint-level Grand Magi.

“Hrm?” Wharton suddenly saw someone from afar.

Noticing that Wharton had paused, Linley couldn’t help but ask questioningly, “What are you looking at?”

“Oh, it’s Wharton. What, did you go to visit his Imperial Majesty?” a cold voice said. Linley turned to look as well. At a glance, Linley could tell that this youngster in front of him was no weakling.

“Blumer, what are you doing over there?” Wharton said coldly. Wharton was fairly familiar with the layout of the imperial palace, especially the wing where the Seventh Princess, Nina, resided in. The direction Blumer was headed from was precisely the direction where Nina’s residence was.

Blumer laughed calmly. “What? Aren’t I allowed to visit Princess Nina?”

“Visit Princess Nina?” Wharton suddenly grew calm. “Blumer, I’ll wager that you haven’t been even allowed inside the main entrance.” This indeed was the case. Blumer had gone to visit Nina, but Nina had shut the gate in his face, refusing to see him at all.

Blumer’s heart had been filled with anger at this. All his life, aside from his older brother whom he worshipped, he had never lowered himself in front of anyone. After becoming the personal disciple of the War God, he had become all the more self-confident. “No. I haven’t been able to get in.”

Wharton laughed calmly. “Blumer, did you think that because you are the personal disciple of the War God, you would definitely be able to marry Nina? Dream on! Big Bro, let’s go.” Linley shook his head with a calm smile, then turned and left alongside Wharton as well.

“Hold it!” Blumer suddenly shouted.

“Oh?” Wharton turned his head to look at him. “Might I ask, oh mighty personal disciple of the War God, what else you want?”

Blumer stared coldly at him. “Wharton, I hear you are of the Dragonblood Warrior clan, and that you are quite powerful after you transform. But I don’t believe it. Today, I formally challenge you to a duel. Do you dare accept?”

Linley couldn’t help but narrow his eyes. Wharton was briefly startled, but

then he laughed loudly. “What do I have to fear?”

“We will meet a month from now, at the imperial capital’s Colosseum. I’ll invite his Imperial Majesty and my fellow apprentices from the War God’s College to officiate. If you don’t have the guts to participate, you can give up,” Blumer said coldly. Blumer then paid no more attention to Wharton, immediately walking away.

The Blade Named 'Slaughterer'

Linley turned his head to glance at his younger brother. Smiling, he said, "Wharton, Blumer knows how powerful you are yet still challenges you. It seems he is quite confident."

Wharton said confidently, "Don't worry, Big Bro. Since when have we Dragonblood Warriors feared anyone at the same rank?"

"That's exactly the sort of confidence you should have." Linley glanced at Blumer's disappearing back. "I noticed the sword this Blumer fellow was carrying. It seems rather special."

"Right. Blumer's sword is extremely fast. When he participated in the competition to become an honorary disciple, he became famous for his fast sword speed. But fast swords are usually not very powerful. He might be able to overcome ordinary opponents of the ninth rank, but given my defensive power, even if he lands a hit on me, he most likely wouldn't be able to break my defense." Wharton was extremely confident. "If the honorary disciple tournament had been a winner-take-all tournament, the victor most likely wouldn't have been him."

Smiling, Linley patted Wharton on his shoulder. "Enough. Honorary disciple of the War God's College? Pfft. Let's go. Time to go home." As the scions of the Dragonblood Warrior clan, Linley and Wharton both possessed a certain level of pride in themselves.

Blumer quickly informed Emperor Johann of the duel, and Emperor Johan immediately sent someone to ask Wharton if this was the case. After knowing that this was indeed the case, Johann immediately issued the order to have his subordinates prepare the Colosseum for this duel between two geniuses.

All of the citizens of the imperial capital became excited after hearing of this impending duel. One was the personal disciple of the War God, the ninth-

ranked warrior, Blumer. The other was a scion of the Dragonblood Warrior clan, the genius of the O'Brien Academy, Wharton!

Most importantly... both of these geniuses were wooing the Seventh Imperial Princess. Given the common folk's natural propensity to engage in gossip, many people began to say that these two geniuses were battling for the sake of the Seventh Princess. All sorts of rumors regarding Wharton, Blumer, and Nina began to fill the streets and alleyways of the imperial capital.

East Channe. Count Wharton's manor, on Boulder Street. Within the training grounds. Linley and Wharton were each standing on opposite sides of the training ground. Housekeeper Hiri, Hillman, Barker, and the others were watching from far away.

The duel on February 4th was one that Wharton had to win.

Linley stared directly at Wharton. "Wharton, since Blumer is famous for his fast sword attacks, I will compete with you using fast sword attacks. Don't hesitate in the slightest. Use your full strength in battling me."

"Yes, Big Brother." His upper body bare, Wharton immediately initiated his transformation. Azure draconic scales began to cover Wharton's entire body, and his arms and legs began to be covered in scales as well, while his nails also began to lengthen and sharpen. A draconic tail sprouted out from behind him, and a single draconic horn emerged from his forehead. His eyes were still black, despite an occasional golden light flashing through them.

"This is the true, authentic Dragonblood Warrior form of our clan." Seeing his little brother's transformation, Linley felt quite moved. He immediately said loudly, "Wharton, attack me at full strength. Quickly!"

"Understood." Wharton's eyes lit up, and he forcefully leapt from the ground, causing the earth where he had been standing on to tremble. Wharton transformed into a blur as he charged towards Linley, his hands tightly grasped around the warblade 'Slaughterer', covered as always with countless bloodstains.

"Wielding something light as though it were heavy!" The Bloodviolet Godsword in Linley's hands, carrying a titanic, heavy force, flew up at a seemingly slow speed towards the warblade 'Slaughterer'. It actually managed

to block 'Slaughterer' in an extremely strange way.

Bang! The two forces collided. Linley felt as though he had been slammed into by a giant meteor, as the astonishing force from that blow was transmitted to him through the Bloodviolet Godsword.

"He really is ridiculously strong. An ordinary blow from him is actually on par with me in human form using 'wielding something light as though it were heavy'." Linley couldn't help but sigh in praise. Dragonblood Warriors truly did have an astonishingly powerful level of strength.

Twisting like a tornado, Linley easily dodged past Wharton. Swish! Nine flashes of violet light appeared. This was just the ordinary attack speed of the Bloodviolet Godsword. As far as Linley was concerned, even though Blumer's sword was very fast, he probably should only be able to reach this level of speed at best.

Tapping the ground with the point of his foot, Wharton quickly leapt backwards with a dodge while also using the warblade 'Slaughterer' in his hands to block Linley's attack. But although he was able to block six of the attacks, the other three attacks from Linley landed on Wharton's body. These attacks were simply ordinary attacks by Linley in his human form.

Clang! Clang! Clang! Three metallic ringing sounds could be heard, as three faint white lines appeared on Wharton's azure blue scales. "Haha... Wharton, it looks like if I don't use a bit of power, I won't be able to hurt you at all." Linley laughed loudly, but in truth, he was very happy.

Wharton looked seriously at his Big Brother. "Big Brother, don't hold back." In his human form, Linley was only an early-stage warrior of the ninth rank. But right now, Wharton was already a peak-stage Dragonblood Warrior of the ninth rank. In terms of strength, battle-qi, or defense, he vastly outstripped Linley.

"Lord, if you keep on holding back, I'm afraid Wharton is going to simply beat you down," Gates shouted loudly from the side.

Laughing, Linley shook his head. "Wharton, be careful." Linley's face turned solemn, and he suddenly began to move at a rapid speed. The entire training yard seemed to have suddenly been filled with a wild gust of wind as Linley's body reached a terrifyingly fast speed.

“Whoosh!” The Bloodviolet Godsword chopped towards Wharton, and seemed to press down against Wharton along with the very space around him.

Impose!

Wharton felt an incredible pressure coming towards him, but faced with this dangerous situation, the Dragonblood in his body began to boil. Letting out a deep growl, Wharton exploded forth the Dragonblood battle-qi in his body, allowing this wild strength to be burst forth from his warblade, ‘Slaughterer’...

Swoooooosh. The locked space was chopped open and the warblade collided directly against Linley’s Bloodviolet, but Bloodviolet only trembled slightly, then immediately transformed into six sword-shadows. At such close range, Wharton was completely unable to use his warblade to block it.

“Haargh!” Wharton clenched his left fist, which suddenly had become covered with azure light, then smashed it against the nearest sword-shadow.

Bam! Bam! Bam! Bam! The six sword-shadows once more transformed into a single physical shape as Bloodviolet once more pierced towards Wharton, carrying with it a terrifying penetrative aura that made Wharton tremble.

Wielding something light as though it were heavy! As fast as lightning!

In the blink of an eye, Linley had stabbed four times at a single spot on Wharton’s body. These repeated stabs pierced through Wharton’s battle-qi and his protective scales, punching into his flesh. As soon as he pierced through the scales, however, Linley immediately retracted his sword and flew back.

Wharton stood there, stupefied, then raised his head to look at Linley. Disbelievingly, he said, “Big Bro, how could you be so fast?” He didn’t even have the ability to react. From this, one could imagine in what a short period of time those attacks had occurred, and yet Linley had sent out four full attacks!

“You call that fast? If I were to reach my limit, then in a situation like that, I could have sent out another six sword attacks. This was relying purely on speed, not relying on any mysteries or deep insights. If I were to utilize the Rippling Wind technique...” A hint of a smile was on Linley’s lips. “In the blink of an eye, I can execute several hundred sword attacks, or even more!”

Wherever there was wind, his sword could appear. The power of the Rippling

Wind technique lay in a single word: “Fast”. So fast it seemed like teleportation. For the speed to reach such a level meant the power of each strike couldn’t be extremely high, but with hundreds of sword blows combined together, the total power was still quite astonishing.

“Hundreds of sword attacks?” Wharton was shocked. “But... good thing Blumer’s speed is far inferior to yours, Big Bro. If he was this fast, I’d rather just admit defeat.”

“Never hope to rely on luck,” Linley rebuked coldly. “Wharton, are you so sure you know Blumer’s absolute highest speed?”

“No, I don’t.” Wharton shook his head.

“Use your most powerful attack against me,” Linley said seriously.

“Yes, Big Bro.” Wharton grew solemn as well. “This attack was one I developed based on my understanding of ‘wielding something heavy as though it were light’. The name is ‘Single Stroke Execution’.” Wharton gripped the warblade ‘Slaughterer’ with both hands, and a metallic light flashed atop the warblade’s edges.

A hint of a smile was on Linley’s face. “That’s a rather murderous name.” Linley wielded Bloodviolet in one hand.

Whoosh! Wharton sped up to his maximum speed, appearing before Linley in the blink of an eye. The warblade, Slaughterer, seemed to dance in his hands, as agile as a falling leaf. *Swish!* It chopped towards Linley.

Although the impression it gave was that it seemed to be moving quite slowly, in the blink of an eye, it arrived in front of Linley. Facing this chop, Linley could actually feel a murderous, bloody aura emanating from it. Linley didn’t dare to be the slightest bit careless.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

Linley seemed to have transformed into a purple sun, radiating a million flashes of violet light. These violet flashes of light all converged against the warblade ‘Slaughterer’. The terrifying attack power that the warblade ‘Slaughterer’ originally had possessed was slowly, yet fully being cancelled out by the force of those countless violet flashes of light.

Bang! The warblade was actually sent flying, while Wharton himself was chopped countless times by those flashes of violet light and sent flying as well. Wharton ended up coughing twice, rubbing his chest as he stood up.

“Not bad. Quite powerful,” Linley said approvingly. “It actually took ten... no, sixteen hits from my sword to cancel out your attack.” When using the Rippling Wind, every sword blow was fairly weak. In truth, if Linley were to attack at full strength, each blow would probably be around 25% of the power of that one chop of Wharton’s. Logically speaking, Linley should’ve been able to cancel out the attack with just four hits.

“In principle, there shouldn’t be any expert of the ninth rank who is a match for you unless he is also a Supreme Warrior, in which case you might have a fight on your hands,” Linley said approvingly.

“Also.” Linley looked at Wharton. “You need to learn how to more agilely control your battle-qi, and also how to move more fluidly. You shouldn’t let the opponent land several blows on you in one spot.” Wharton nodded.

“Lord.” A servant ran over and bowed respectfully. “Lord, there is a fellow called Reynolds who says he has come to see you, Lord Linley.”

“Reynolds?” Linley’s eyes lit up. Not bothering to chat any longer with his little brother, Linley immediately rushed towards the outside of the manor. Linley hadn’t seen his fourth bro, Reynolds, for nine full years.

Reaching the front courtyard, Linley’s footsteps slowed. Seeing the figure outside the gate, Linley felt as though he had gone back in time. His most carefree, happy youthful years had been spent with his beloved bros, when the four young men had gone to the Jadewater Paradise to drink and have fun. Those distant days were so happy.

As for now, the current Reynolds was wearing a long, plain robe. His waist was now ramrod straight. His long years spent in the army had given Reynolds the aura of a military man, and he was now nearly 1.9 meters tall.

“Fourth Bro!”

Reynolds, who had been waiting at the gate, heard the shout. He immediately looked over, and his eyes lit up. Linley had changed as well. That dazzlingly

genius had now become much more reserved and composed. “Third Bro!”

“Haha...” The two brothers rushed towards each other, clutching each other in an embrace.”

“I didn’t expect that you, Fourth Bro, would join the army. It’s been seven or eight years now, right? When you were at the gate, I actually wasn’t sure if it was you. I was wondering to myself, why has a military official come here?” Linley teased.

Reynolds clubbed Linley on the chest. “Damnit, Third Bro, I had no choice but to join the army. My old man forced me to. What was I supposed to do?”

“Fortunately, this time when I took my leave of absence, Yale sent someone to inform me that you had arrived at the imperial capital. On my way back, I came to pay a visit to your little bro and look for you. I felt sure that upon arriving at the imperial capital, you’d definitely head to your little bro’s place. And see? Here you are.”

“Haha, let’s go inside and chat.” After having been separated for nine years, these brothers had countless things to say to each other. They had been separated for nine years. Nine years later, those two youths had both become accomplished young men.

The Colosseum

Night arrived. The imperial capital of Channe was still as bustling and as beautiful as brocade, but the wilderness outside East Channe was very desolate. On the desolate road, there was a single ghost-like human figure rapidly heading east. In the blink of an eye, the human figure travelled over a hundred meters.

This person was the personal disciple of the War God, the current rising star of the imperial capital: Blumer Akerlund.

The imperial capital of Channe was surrounded by many mountains. Outside West Channe was the War God Mountain and other mountains, while outside East Channe was a number of unremarkable mountain peaks as well. Blumer quickly arrived at one seemingly ordinary mountain.

At the top of this mountain was a peak that seemed knife-sharp. At the absolute top of this peak, a man was seated in the meditative stance. Looking at how he sat there, one might be forgiven for having the strange feeling that this man had been there for tens of millions of years.

Arriving at the mountain peak, Blumer said respectfully, "Elder Brother." Clearly, the person quietly meditating at the peak of the mountain was Blumer's elder brother, the one known as the Prodigy Sword Saint, Olivier. Tonight, there was no moon in the sky, nor any stars. In the darkness, one could only hazily make out Olivier's figure.

"Second Brother. Is there something you need?" a cold voice rang out. Blumer knew that his elder brother had been quietly meditating here on this mountain peak for three full years. These three years, his elder brother had neither eaten nor drank anything. He had used the skies as his roof and the earth as his bed.

Three years ago, when he had seen his big brother, he could sense a terrifying, incisive aura emanating from his big brother's body. That sort of aura

gave the impression that with just a thought, Olivier could defeat him. But after three years, his elder brother seemed to have turned into a boulder on the mountain, without any aura at all.

No one had any idea how powerful the current Olivier had become!

“Elder brother, on the fourth of the next month, which is to say fifteen days from now, I will have a duel with a scion of the Dragonblood Warrior clan at the Colosseum of Channe,” Blumer said respectfully.

“Dragonblood Warrior clan?” Olivier’s normally tranquil voice seemed to carry a hint of interest. “According to legend, Saint-level Dragonblood Warriors are powerful even amongst Saint. I very much want to exchange blows with a Saint-level Dragonblood Warrior, but they have disappeared long ago from the Yulan continent. Mmm. How strong is the person whom you are dueling?”

“After transforming, he should be at the peak-stage of the ninth rank,” Blumer said respectfully.

“Oh. Using the sword arts that I taught you, you should be invincible amongst all ninth rank combatants,” Olivier said calmly. “Enough. You can leave now.”

Blumer hesitated a moment, then said in a low voice, “Elder brother, on the day of my duel... can you come?”

Olivier was quiet for a moment. Then... “February 4th. Understood. If I have time, I will hasten there.” Olivier’s voice didn’t change tone in the slightest. It was as calm as ever.

“Then I bid you farewell.” Blumer immediately left. The mountain peak returned to its prior stillness. That human shadow in the darkness didn’t move at all, as though it had always been and always would be part of that mountain peak.



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Yulan calendar, year 10009. February 4th. This was the day two geniuses were going to duel, and many people in the imperial capital hurried excitedly to the Colosseum. Those eighty thousand Colosseum tickets had been sold out long

ago, and today, it wasn't just people from the imperial capital who were hurrying to watch the duel. There were people from other cities and even other provinces.

Linley's group had arrived at the Colosseum early on, and had been given a private room within it. Linley, Reynolds, and Yale were engaged in active conversation.

"Boss Yale, I didn't expect that you would be able to make it here as well." Reynolds laughed.

Yale's forehead was still covered in sweat. Looking at Linley and Reynolds, he laughed very happily. "After I heard that you arrived at the imperial capital, Fourth Bro, and that Third Bro was here as well, even the most important of tasks became irrelevant. Of course I came! This time, I can also help cheer on Third Bro's little brother."

"Boss Yale, Fourth Bro, you all came. Now, we're only missing Second Bro," Linley said emotionally.

"Second Bro is now a Grand Secretary of the Yulan Empire. He has extremely high status. What's more, given that the distance from there to here is over ten thousand kilometers, how can he possibly make it in time?" Yale sighed as well.

Reynolds laughingly cursed, "Back when the four of us were at the Academy, Second Bro was the most glib and most crafty. He participated in every school activity, and he also was very good at hosting them. I knew even back then that he would be suited for officialdom, and see? Just ten years later, he's managed to swindle his way into becoming a Grand Secretary of the Yulan Empire."

"It is fortunate that the current Emperor of the Yulan Empire succeeded to the throne when he did. This caused his position and status to immediately rise," Yale said approvingly.

Footsteps could be heard outside the door. "Bro, we're heading out to the Colosseum. Let's go." Hearing this call, Yale, Linley, and Reynolds all rose and left the resting room.

In the center of the Colosseum, there was a dueling platform over three hundred meters long and three hundred meters wide. The platform was

constructed from enormous slabs of tough rock, and were covered with large-scale magical arrays.

On the east and west sides of the dueling platform were the viewing platforms for the families of the duelists. Directly in front of the dueling platform was the position reserved for the officiating hosts of the duel.

Wharton, Linley, and the others came out of the tunnel. Seeing the countless teeming human forms surround them in the Colosseum, they couldn't help but feel stunned. "So many people." Wharton had a forced smile on his face.

The fifth brother Gates said with a laugh, "Wharton, there are eighty thousand people here today. You'd best not lose any face." The chants from the crowd seemed like the howling of the seas, filling the air. Linley and his group could totally sense the excitement of the onlookers.

The O'Brien Empire was a highly martial empire. The duel between two ultimate geniuses would attract the attention of countless people. There were eighty thousand watchers inside, and outside the Colosseum there were many people hoping they would somehow have a chance to catch a glimpse of this duel.

Linley, Yale, Reynolds, Barker and his brothers, and the others all sat down right above Wharton's seat. Blumer's side had arrived early as well. Blumer had many people with him, over a hundred.

"Plenty of them are honorary disciples of the War God's College. It seems they have come to support Blumer," Linley said with a calm laugh. He could tell that all of those people were very strong.

"What good does it do him to bring so many supporters?" Yale laughed contemptuously. Right at this time, the chants began to build. Clearly, with both the participants in the duel having appeared, everyone had become extremely excited.

"Eighty thousand people. The most people I've seen in one location, even in the army, was ten thousand training together." Reynolds stared at the spectacle here in the Colosseum. As the Four Great Empires currently were not in an era of large-scale warfare, it was rare to see the various armies massed together.

“Everyone, silence!” A voice rang out like a bolt of thunder, covering the entire Colosseum. Those eighty thousand viewers immediately quieted down as they stared at the silver-haired old man in the middle of the Colosseum.

Linley and the others began to chuckle. This silver-haired old man was an expert of the ninth rank. Given his prowess in battle-qi, it wasn’t hard for him to have his voice cover the entire Colosseum. “For a duel such as this, even the officiating host must be an expert.” Linley sighed ruefully.

The silver-haired old man boomed out, “Everyone, this duel we are about to see is the most important duel in recent history. Of the two participants, one is the personal disciple of the War God, Marquis Blumer. The other is a scion of the Dragonblood Warrior clan, Count Wharton. Both of them are unquestionably talented, but just who is stronger?”

The silver-haired old man began to laugh. “Soon enough, everyone will know. As for the judges for this day, I expect everyone will be very happy once you learn who they are. The first is the personal disciple of the War God, Lord Kenyon,” the silver-haired old man said in a clear voice.

A middle-aged man with graying temples, dressed in a long blue robe, came striding out of a tunnel. And then, with a single step, he seemed to turn into a blur. Lord Kenyon suddenly appeared in the judge’s position, then sat down.

The appearance of Lord Kenyon sent everyone in the Colosseum into a frenzy, as countless shouts and chants could be heard. “A Saint.” Linley was absolutely certain. Just then, Kenyon had used a flying technique to directly arrive at the leftmost judge’s position.

“The second is our Imperial Majesty, the Emperor of the O’Brien Empire.” The silver-haired old man’s voice grew higher, and the lavishly dressed Johann, face beaming with smiles, walked towards the judge’s seats, taking the middle position. The arrival of the Emperor naturally instigated yet another bout of wild joy.

The silver-haired old man’s face was covered with smiles as well. “After finding out who our third judge is, I too was both shocked and overjoyed.” The silver-haired old man intentionally paused a moment, and the eighty thousand viewers all fell silent, listening closely. Who was this third judge?

“The third judge is the pride of our Empire... the Monolithic Sword Saint, Lord Haydson!”

As soon as the words ‘Lord Haydson’ came out, the entire Colosseum seemed to go utterly mad, as the countless viewers began to scream and shout excitedly.

“HAYDSON! HAYDSON!!!”

“MONOLITHIC SWORD SAINT!”

Some of the more powerful warriors began to use their battle-qi to shout. The chants sounded like a million thunderbolts ripping through the Colosseum as everyone went stark raving mad.

“Crazy. They’ve all gone crazy.” Gates was flabbergasted. “Is it worth getting this crazy over a Saint-level expert?”

Zassler glanced at him, laughing. “You haven’t been in the O’Brien Empire for very long. You have no idea how influential the Monolithic Sword Saint is.”

Reynolds’ eyes were filled with excitement as well. “After reaching the Saint level, Lord Haydson has experienced countless duels and battles, but he has never lost a single time! Even against the other peak-stage Saints of the Empire, he achieved complete victory. He is the number one Saint. No one amongst the Saints can defeat him. He is the Monolithic Sword Saint – Haydson!”

Linley, Wharton, and the others all stared at the distant tunnel, quietly awaiting Haydson’s appearance.

Haydson finally came out. He appeared simple and unadorned, the lines of his face as hard and sharp as something from a stone sculpture. He wore only a simple gray robe, and on his back was an earth-colored heavy sword.

His steps were steady and sure. Haydson didn’t use any flying technique. He merely walked forward, and yet with a single step he somehow walked from the tunnel to the officiating host’s platform. With the second step, he somehow arrived next to Emperor Johann, then took his seat next to Johann. It was as though he had teleported!

“What was that?” Linley had seen something that was utterly unbelievable.

Barker and the others were all stunned as well.

“Was that teleportation?” Wharton murmured. But Linley was absolutely certain it was not teleportation! As far as Linley knew, there was no one alive who could teleport. Teleportation was just a fairy tale.

“When Haydson walked, the entire earth seemed to tremble. In the blink of an eye, it was as though that long distance suddenly became short, allowing him to travel dozens of meters with one step. It was so relaxed. It didn’t rely on speed at all. With but a single step, he could somehow shorten the distance?”

It was simply too astonishing. Linley’s own training relied on two different paths. One was on divining the Laws of the Earth, and the other was on attuning with the Laws of the Wind. This simple technique that Haydson utilized had something to do with the Laws of the Earth, but... Linley could not understand it at all. How had Haydson done this?

“Whew.” Letting out a deep breath, Linley calmly sat down. “He is reputed to be the number one amongst Saint-levels. In all these years, no one has ever defeated him. It makes sense for a person like him to have such ability.” Linley was still very confident in himself.

Haydson might have his own marvelous abilities, but wouldn’t Haydson in turn be unable to understand Linley’s vibrational attacks? Although they both attuned to the Laws of the Earth, they had each embarked on different paths of it!

The Duel

Both the Emperor Johann as well as the War God's disciple, Kenyon, immediately stood up, smiling as they greeted Haydson. Haydson acted in a very friendly manner, greeting Emperor Johann and Kenyon as well.

The three judges then sat down. Behind the judges there were many seats as well, all taken. These people primarily consisted of the likes of the Empress, the imperial consorts, the princes, and the princesses.

"Nina." Wharton saw that Nina was in that crowd of people, and she saw him as well. Over the past few days, the Emperor had restricted her from leaving the palace, so the two hadn't seen each other in over a month. Given the depths of their affection for each other, even three days without seeing each other would feel like three years. These thirty days of not seeing each other had been very arduous indeed.

Wharton and Nina exchanged glances. They could sense from each other's gazes the love and affection each bore the other.

"Hrmph." Seeing this, Blumer couldn't help but snort coldly. An ordinary person might not have been able to see this clearly from a distance of hundreds of meters, but Blumer's vision was simply too good. He could clearly see the loving look in these two people's eyes. Sometimes, having good eyesight wasn't necessarily a good thing.

The silver-haired old man looked at the Emperor and at the judges. Emperor Johann nodded, and the silver-haired old man laughed. In a sonorous voice, he said, "Everyone, please be quiet. The duel between the two geniuses of the O'Brien Empire is about to start. First, introducing the challenger, the personal disciple of the War God... Blumer!"

The challenger was the first to be announced, while the challenged was the second to be announced. This was the rule. Carrying a long sword on his back,

and dressed in a blue warrior's outfit, Blumer flew several dozen meters into the air, arriving onto the dueling platform.

"BLUMER!" "BLUMER!" Many of the eighty thousand onlookers began to chant loudly. Clearly, many supporters of Blumer were here today. In the hearts of many people, Blumer's older brother, Olivier, was the pride of the O'Brien Empire.

"Quiet." The silver-haired old man smiled. "Next is Wharton, of the Dragonblood Warrior clan."

Rumble... Tearing off his upper body clothes, Wharton bared his torso, revealing his explosively muscular chest and causing many viewers to roar in excitement.

"Hrmph." Seeing this, Blumer only let out a cold, contemptuous sneer.

Taking the warblade 'Slaughterer' in his hands, Wharton leapt straight onto the dueling platform. Given Wharton's 2.2-meter-tall stature, the massive warblade in his hands, and his bare upper body...

Wharton emanated an absolutely heroic aura. Heroic! This sort of aura caused many people to begin joyful chants. "WHARTON!" "WHARTON!" These chants began to erupt as well, and these supporters were not any fewer in number than Blumer's.

"What is so impressive about Blumer, that he was able to become the personal disciple of the War God? Today, everyone shall find out," the silver-haired old man said sonorously. "As for the legendary Dragonblood Warriors, acclaimed as Supreme Warriors, today everyone will have a chance to witness them in action as well."

"I now announce..." the silver-haired old man's voice went up in pitch. "This duel has commenced!"

In the blink of an eye, Wharton's body was covered with azure draconic scales. A draconic horn sprouted forth from his forehead, and that blue draconic tail came out as well. The entire dueling platform began to tremble. Beneath the light of the sun, those azure-blue draconic scales radiated a dazzling glare.

“Ooooooooooh.” A collective noise of surprise could be heard from the onlookers. None of the people present had seen the Dragonform transformation. This transformation of Wharton’s had utterly stunned the watchers. But after being momentarily stunned, everyone burst into wild cheers of joy.

“A Dragonblood Warrior?” All three of the judges watched with their eyes lit up. Haydson looked at Wharton with interest. “It would be wonderful if he was a Saint.” The legendary Saint-level Dragonblood Warriors were experts even amongst Saints, while he himself, the Monolithic Sword Saint Haydson, was also a champion amongst Saints.

It had been a long time since Haydson had tasted defeat. Yet if he were to challenge a Deity-level combatant, he would definitely lose in an instant. Against that sort of overwhelming force, there was nothing Haydson could do either. He truly hoped that there would appear a Saint-level combatant capable of defeating him. Perhaps, he would gain some insights and suddenly break through to the next level, reaching the Deity-level.

“So this is a Dragonblood Warrior?” A twelve-year-old child holding Nina’s hands who sat next to her said. Nina looked at the figure on the dueling platform, then nodded. “Right. This is the legendary Supreme Warrior.” Given the relationship between the two of them, Wharton had long ago demonstrated the Dragonform transformation for her.

“Haha, Dragonblood Warrior. Not bad.” Blumer looked at Wharton and began to laugh. “But my Akerlund clan has never believed the Four Supreme Warriors to be all that strong.”

Blumer stared coldly at Wharton as he drew his longsword with a flip of his hand. The longsword looked like it was forged from a piece of ice, seemingly transparent. Beneath the light of the sun, it radiated all the colors of the rainbow. Blumer confidently looked at Wharton, and he loudly said, “This is the precious sword that my older brother gifted to me: Icedream.”

Wharton hefted the warblade ‘Slaughterer’. In a cold voice, he said, “The warblade ‘Slaughterer’ is the ancestral heirloom of our Baruch clan, the personal weapon of the first Dragonblood Warrior.”

“Oh?” Blumer sneered.

All the onlookers fell silent. They watched with wide eyes carefully trained on this duel between geniuses. They didn’t want to miss a thing.

Whoosh! In the blink of an eye, Blumer seemed to suddenly disappear as a violent gust of wind suddenly appeared out of nowhere in the dueling platform. This was a gust of wind created by Blumer’s speed.

The wind blasted against Wharton’s face, but Wharton simply stood there without moving. “Hrm?” Wharton suddenly noticed Blumer out of the corner of his left eye. Just as Wharton turned and prepared to attack, he suddenly sensed another gust of wind ambushing him from his right.

Indeed. Blumer’s real body was to his right. Laughing coldly, Blumer looked at Wharton as he mercilessly chopped towards Wharton with Icedream. But Wharton, his back facing Blumer, suddenly smashed with his iron-whip-like draconic tail.

WHAP! The draconic tail smashed viciously against Icedream, with part of the tail landing against Blumer’s body as well. *BAM!* Blumer was sent flying by that blow as if he were but a sandbag. In mid-air, Blumer recovered with a beautiful somersault, landing on one knee at the edge of the platform.

All the viewers held their breath, not daring to chant or shout. “Ugh.” Blumer spat out a bit of blood, then stared at his chest, where the draconic tail had struck. His clothes had been ripped apart. Although his chest had been protected by battle-qi, the battle-qi had been ripped open. A visible wound was on his chest, and blood was slowly leaking out.

Only now did Wharton turn around, staring at Blumer with his cold black eyes. A golden light flashed through those eyes.

“What incredible might,” Blumer said in a low voice. Without question, no warrior at the same level possessed the same strength or attack power as a Dragonblood Warrior. Just a swipe from Wharton’s draconic tail was enough to deeply wound Blumer.

Blumer now fully understood that in fighting Wharton, he could not allow himself to be struck. Just the tip of the draconic tail had struck his chest, but he

had still been wounded. If it had been a full blow, he probably would've suffered a much more grievous injury.

Boom! With monstrous force, Wharton kicked off from the ground, which trembled despite the protective magical barriers on it. Transforming into a cruel blur, in the blink of an eye Wharton crossed the hundred-meter distance between the two of them as he charged at Blumer.

"Haaaargh!" Slaughterer came crashing down on Blumer, carrying an incredible amount of force. Without hesitating in the slightest, Blumer immediately moved to dodge. And yet, as Wharton attacked with the warblade he simultaneously spun around and kicked out with both legs viciously at Blumer.

Blumer didn't dare to block at all, only continuing to retreat at high speed. *Whap!* But despite his high speed of retreat, that lightning-fast draconic tail snapped towards him once again, and Blumer hurriedly raised Icedream to block.

Bam! Despite striking against Icedream, the powerful force of the blow still sent Blumer flying far away towards the spectator stands of the Colosseum. The people standing near the spectator stands quickly scattered as Blumer viciously slammed down.

Bam! The stone spectator stands split apart, sending rubble flying everywhere and covering the area with dust. All the viewers sucked in cold breaths. Dragonblood Warriors were simply too powerful. Because of their terrifyingly powerful draconic scales, their legs, arms, and tail could clash head on against weapons. This was a major advantage.

"Aaaaargh!" With a wild howl, Blumer came flying out from the dust cloud. He didn't charge directly at Wharton; rather, he charged towards the other side of the dueling platform. With just three massive leaps, Blumer arrived at the other side.

"Blumer, you will definitely lose," Wharton said coldly.

Blumer's body was covered in bloodstains, but he still stood ramrod straight. Blumer didn't look at Wharton, only at the longsword in his hand. "I originally wanted to defeat you using the sword technique that I personally developed.

But it seems that I will have to use the sword technique that my older brother taught me.”

“His older brother’s sword technique?” Haydson could clearly hear each word. “Olivier’s Lightshadow Sword? I wonder how much of Olivier’s technique he has mastered.”

Linley frowned as well. *Olivier’s sword technique?*

“Remember, the technique that defeated you is the Lightshadow Sword!” Blumer’s cold voice rang out. Suddenly, the Icedream sword in Blumer’s hand became covered with a layer of golden light.

Rumble... The strange thing was, standing on the dueling platform, Blumer suddenly split into two people along with the sword in his hands. But then, those two shadows split once more...

One became two. Two became four. Four became eight. This sight was simply too queer.

“What astonishing speed.” Given his current level of enlightenment, Linley could tell that this Blumer was relying on an astonishing level of speed to generate this effect. “It is actually slightly faster than my fastest speed in human form.” Linley was secretly shocked.

Wharton kept a careful, solemn guard. He felt as though he were surrounded by Blumer’s shadows. Blumer was very fast, far faster than him. Even faster than his Big Brother Linley’s human form.

“You will lose for sure.” The ice-cold voice seemed to ring out simultaneously from all of those human shadows. Just as Wharton tightened his guard even further, those illusionary shadows suddenly blurred as Blumer appeared in front of him.

Slash! Wharton simply didn’t have time to use his warblade to block, and so he could only raise his arm, relying on it to block this blow.

Clang! The sound of metal ringing on metal could be heard. Icedream only left a white line on Wharton’s scales, but at the same time, Wharton’s draconic tail... *Swish!* The draconic tail came smashing over... but Blumer disappeared yet again. Having failed with this attack, he had immediately retreated.

“What is going on?” Wharton was shocked. “How did he suddenly appear in front of me just now?”

But Linley had seen everything clearly and understood. “Using the illusionary effects of this Lightshadow technique, he can draw near without his opponents noticing, and then using his astonishing speed appear in front of his opponent before the opponent has a chance to react.”

Linley was able to use his understanding of the wind to easily determine where his opponent was, as a way to overcome this technique. Wharton, however, didn’t have much attunement to the wind.

“Why are there so many shadows.” The eighty thousand onlookers were stunned. They saw that on the dueling platform, sixteen shadow-Blumers had appeared. As a piercing golden light flashed, one of Blumer’s shadow-bodies appeared in a different location.

The total number of shadows remained sixteen in number. Whenever one shadow disappeared, another shadow would appear in a different location. Every single time there was a change, there was a flash of golden light. It was bizarre.

Wharton watched carefully. Wharton’s vision was dazzled by yet another golden flash, and right at this moment Blumer’s longsword appeared in front of him. Blumer didn’t aim this attack at any other location, only at Wharton’s eyes.

That flashing golden sword had already appeared in front of Wharton’s eyes.

Intending to Inflict Serious Wounds

“Bam!” A draconic-scale-covered left hand suddenly swung up and tightly gripped the Icedream sword in Blumer’s hand. Despite his attack power, Blumer was still unable to make Icedream pierce forward by even an inch. The palm of Wharton’s left hand was tightly pressed against the tip of Icedream’s blade.

The look on Blumer’s face changed.

Flee!

Drawing his sword back with a powerful pull, Blumer quickly fell backwards, pressing his back nearly against the dueling platform while hurriedly scuttling backwards. Right at this moment, Wharton’s draconic tail smashed towards Blumer.

If Blumer hadn’t pressed his body down to the ground, he definitely would have been struck.

“Whew.” Blumer stood once more at the edge of the dueling platform, panting slightly. That had been too close; he had almost been struck by Wharton’s draconic tail.

Blumer’s head hurt. Wharton’s defense was simply too powerful. His attacks couldn’t break that defense at all.

“Is that technique my only option?” Blumer only had a superficial understanding of the ‘Lightshadow Sword’ technique, but according to what Olivier had taught him, he could still utilize the most powerful attack of the Lightshadow Sword.



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Everyone in the Colosseum was holding their breaths. These experts simply

fought at too high a speed, making it impossible for most people to see clearly what was going on. They only saw that Blumer seemed to have transformed into sixteen shadows, moving about as though he was teleporting.

But Wharton was like a sturdy castle. No matter how Blumer attacked, he was unable to hurt Wharton.

“If you won’t attack me, then it’s my turn to attack you,” Wharton’s voice rang out in the Colosseum, and then Wharton charged wildly towards Blumer.

Blumer immediately prepared to dodge.

But Wharton’s seemingly light, agile blow from his warblade had reached a bizarre speed, and was chopping directly at Blumer’s skull. Blumer quickly fell backwards while kicking off against the ground.

“Whoosh!” Blumer retreated backwards at high speed.

Although his retreat was very fast, Wharton’s warblade ‘Slaughterer’ was even faster. Just as it was about to reach Blumer’s vital chest area, Blumer immediately split his legs open and rolled backwards.

“Bam!” ‘Slaughterer’ just scraped Blumer on the back, slamming against the ground.

Slaughterer - Single Stroke Execution!

“Boom!” The entire dueling platform began to tremble, and the magical formation on the dueling platform actually split apart as massive cracks appeared on the platform. This caused all of the eighty thousand viewers to feel both shock and fear.

The defense of this dueling platform was incredibly strong, but the magical array had actually been destroyed nonetheless?

Blumer somersaulted in mid-air, then landed at the edges of the dueling platform. The audience near him couldn’t help but begin to cry out in shock and fear.

Blumer roared angrily, a fierce look on his face.

With a fierce kick against the dueling platform, Wharton flew into the air at high speed towards Blumer’s direction as the platform beneath him cracked yet

again. Blumer once again dodged.

“Ahhh!” Seeing Wharton charge towards them, all the onlookers up above began to scream in fear.

But despite moving at high speed, Wharton only lightly balanced against the wall, then changed direction, continuing to pursue after Blumer.

Blumer retreated back to the top of the dueling platform, his face now completely red as his body emanated a red light. His face then turned a golden color, although his eyes remained red.

“What is Blumer doing?” Linley frowned.

Wharton, showing no fear, brandished the warblade ‘Slaughterer’ and charged directly at Blumer for close quarters combat.

Right now, many of the viewers began to cheer for Wharton, while others cursed at Blumer. Clearly, Blumer’s repeated dodges had roused the anger of the crowd. Relying on greater speed to run and hide; what was that? Why not just admit defeat?

Blumer stared coldly at the charging Wharton, a hint of madness in his bloodshot eyes.

The golden aura covering Icedream suddenly carried a hint of white light in it. From a distance, Linley could clearly tell that the sword’s aura had grown more powerful.

“Rumble...”

Repeating his old tactic, Blumer’s body once more separated into multiple images. As flashes of golden-white light appeared, so too did more and more shadow-Blumers.

“Blumer, can’t you do anything besides just run?” Wharton stood there. “If you have any ability, come and play.”

Wharton knew that in speed, he was inferior to Blumer.

“As you wish, Wharton!” A gnashing, wrathful voice could be heard as a dazzling golden light flashed, and a longsword appeared in front of Wharton.

Wharton was shocked.

In terms of speed, this time it was even faster than last time.

“Haaargh!” Wharton once more wanted to use his left hand to grab at Icedream and rely on the toughness of the scales around his palm to block the tip, but this time...

“Slash!”

Covered with that golden-white aura, Icedream actually pierced straight through Wharton’s palm and then, with astonishing speed, stabbed into Wharton’s scale-armored chest.

And then, still covered in that bizarre golden-white light, Icedream once more split open Wharton’s scales.

Although it took time to describe it, the actual event happened in the blink of an eye. Icedream pierced through both Wharton’s palm and into his chest, and Wharton had actually reacted very quickly as well.

“Fuck off!” Wharton’s right leg kicked viciously against Blumer.

Blumer, forewarned, had immediately begun to withdraw his sword. Piercing through the opponent was difficult, but pulling the sword out was much easier. Blumer dodged Wharton’s kick, but he wasn’t able to dodge the slap from Wharton’s draconic tail...

Wharton had actually launched consecutive attacks with his leg and tail.

“Whap!” That draconic tail came swinging towards him. Unable to dodge it, Blumer could only use his left arm to block, while at the same time, allowing the momentum of the force to carry him backwards.

“Bam!”

The battle-qi protecting Blumer’s left arm immediately split open, and the tip of the draconic tail actually slammed into Blumer’s chest, knocking Blumer spinning through the air.

Wharton fell to the ground paralyzed, blood pouring from the wound in his chest.

“Big lunk!”

Nina called out in shock.

Wharton’s injury was very severe. This sword blow from Blumer had pierced into his vitals and damaged his internal organs. Even coughing wracked Wharton’s body with immense pain.

Blumer flipped up from his fallen position on the ground.

His left arm was broken, but he was still battle-worthy. But right now, Wharton could no longer move. If he were to try to do so, his severe injury would only grow more severe, to the point where he might even lose his life.

“Haha...”

Blumer laughed coldly. By this point, it could be said that Blumer was the victor, but Blumer actually moved at high speed towards Wharton, the Icedream sword in his hands stabbing mercilessly towards Wharton.

Just as Blumer moved, another human figure suddenly moved as well.

“Fuck off!” An angry roar could be heard. The eighty thousand viewers only saw a sudden hurricane wind appear out of nowhere, and then countless flashes of violet light simultaneously struck against Blumer.

Blumer immediately hurriedly roused the battle-qi in his body to form a protective armor.

He didn’t dare to take the blow head on. Borrowing the momentum force from those blows, he hurriedly retreated, letting himself be blasted backwards. But despite that, he still suffered several dozen sword wounds.

Blood flowed everywhere.

Fortunately, he retreated at high speed. If he had dared to resist the blow for even a second, Linley’s sword would have run him through. The only things he had suffered so far were superficial wounds.

“Wharton, are you okay?” Linley couldn’t be bothered with Blumer as he immediately inspected Wharton’s injury.

“I... am fine.” Wharton shook his head.

Linley's face changed. The chest was a vital area. A serious blow there could be life threatening. That Blumer could already be considered to have achieved victory, but he still had wanted to kill Wharton.

"This gentleman with the violet sword, please depart. Others cannot interfere in the duel between these two," a cold voice rang out. The speaker was one of the judges, Mr. Kenyon.

Linley turned to stare at him.

Couldn't he tell that Wharton had already been defeated?

"I represent my younger brother in admitting defeat," Linley said coldly. If they lost a duel, then they lost it. To Linley, this wasn't nearly as important as Wharton's life.

It was normal for an expert to lose a duel at times. As long as they could learn from their losses, they would be able to slowly improve.

"Impossible," Kenyon said calmly. "Per the rules of the competition, unless one of the duelists personally admits defeat, the duel must continue to its conclusion. Since Wharton has not yet admitted defeat, the duel has not finished."

Blumer rose to his feet as well.

Although he looked as though he had been badly injured, Linley's sword hadn't injured him at his vital points. He still could do battle.

"You are Wharton's older brother? Nonetheless, I still ask that you depart. Wharton and I will continue our competition," Blumer said directly.

Wharton's chest was deeply injured, and he could only speak in a tiny voice. If he used too much force to speak, his wound would worsen as well. Wharton opened his mouth, forcing himself to say loudly, "I... I..."

Watching beads of sweat form on his little brother's forehead as he struggled, Linley's heart clenched in pain. "Wharton, don't speak. Don't speak." Linley stopped his little brother from speaking.

"Sir, please leave the dueling platform," the judge, Kenyon, spoke again in a loud voice.

“You shut your motherfucking mouth!!!” Linley roared at him loudly, filled with rage.

The entire Colosseum grew silent. Even the judge, Kenyon, was stunned. He... he had just been cursed at?!

He, a stately personal disciple of the War God, a Saint-level expert, had just been cursed!?

In the Colosseum, in front of eighty thousand viewers, he had been cursed!!!

Kenyon immediately erupted with fury.

“Whoosh!” Kenyon immediately flew out of the judge’s stand towards the dueling platform, staring at Linley coldly. “What type of thing are you, that you dare speak to your betters in such a way?”

Kenyon was both a Saint-level expert and the personal disciple of the War God. Who would dare be disrespectful to him?

Even the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, was very polite towards him. But today, in front of all these people, he had actually been cursed out by this person who came from gods-knew-where.

“Barker, take Wharton away first.” Linley glanced coldly at Kenyon.

Barker and his brothers immediately rushed towards the dueling platform.

“Boom!” “Boom!” “Boom!” Barker and his brothers landed on the platform with those long-handled greataxes on their backs, and the weight of those five-thousand-plus-pound greataxes caused the earth to shudder.

All the onlookers had gone completely silent.

Barker and his brothers very carefully lifted Wharton up, taking him down from the platform. As they did, however, Barker and the others glared viciously at Kenyon.

“Fuck, who the fuck does he think he is?” Gates even cursed at him in a low growl.

Kenyon couldn’t help but stare angrily at Gates... but just at this moment, Linley’s body began to undergo an astonishing transformation. Black draconic

scales sprouted forth from his body, and his forehead, back, elbows, and knees all became covered with sharp spikes. A black draconic tail began to wave about behind him.

“Ah!” the onlooking audience members cried out in shock.

“He is a Dragonblood Warrior as well?” Seeing this, Haydson was shocked as well. Linley’s Dragonform was much more ferocious-looking than Wharton’s, in particular that line of spikes running up his spine.

Raising his head, Linley stared at Kenyon with those utterly remorseless dark golden eyes.

Today, Linley’s heart was filled with boundless fury. An expert such as Kenyon should have easily been able to tell the sort of condition his little brother was in. His little brother had already lost, and so Emperor Johann and Haydson hadn’t spoken out or tried to stop Linley. But Kenyon had tried to stop him. Clearly, he was biased in favor of his fellow apprentice, Blumer.

Kenyon began to grow wary.

He discovered...

The person in front of him was a threat.

“Dragonblood Warrior?” Kenyon said in a solemn voice, floating in mid-air.

Linley actually rose into the air as well, rising to the same height as Kenyon as he stared coldly at him. Seeing Linley float in the air, everyone in the Colosseum exploded with excitement.

Good heavens! Yet another Saint-level combatant!

Was this going to be a battle between two Saint-level combatants? This was simply too exciting!

Two Saint-level experts stood in mid-air, staring at each other!

“I already told you that my younger brother admitted defeat. But you... still wanted my younger brother to continue,” Linley’s voice was utterly cold, seeming to come from the underworld.

“My fellow apprentice only wanted your younger brother to personally admit

defeat. He didn't actually want your younger brother to continue. Your younger brother could've admitted defeat, but he refused to. Whose fault is that?" Blumer equivocated.

"Roll the fuck away."

Linley let out an angry shout as he suddenly moved. How could Kenyon watch Linley act without stopping him? He immediately drew a gold-black dual-color staff and he smashed it towards Linley.

"Fuck off!"

Linley's entire body seemed to have transformed into the sun, as countless violet sword-shadows blasted out in every direction. In the blink of an eye, ten million sword-shadows stabbed towards Kenyon.

Profound Truths of the Wind – Rippling Wind!

Kenyon was completely unable to block. In the blink of an eye, the layer of protective battle-qi over his body exploded with a 'BAM!'. Facing certain death, Kenyon retreated backwards at high speed in terror, but despite that, he was still stabbed several times by Bloodviolet.

Kenyon landed at the edge of the dueling platform, his long robes completely soaked with blood. He looked absolutely pathetic.

Kenyon stared at Linley in shock and terror.

They were on totally different levels. Linley definitely had the power of a peak-stage Saint-level expert!

A majestic personal disciple of the War God, a Saint-level expert... had been reduced to such dire straits by a single attack.

"Blumer!" When Linley turned to look at Blumer, he saw that Blumer, sensing that things were going terribly wrong, had immediately fled from the platform, heading towards the position of the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson.

The only person standing above the platform was Linley, who looked like a vicious demon who had descended from another plane of existence. That devilish Bloodviolet flexible sword was still dripping with blood.

The Colosseum. Eighty thousand viewers. Utter, deathly silence!

The Prodigy Sword Saint

With a single stroke, Linley had defeated a Saint-level expert who was the personal disciple of the War God. In addition, Linley's current transformation was into a terrifying form. This deeply shocked everyone present. None of the eighty thousand viewers actually dared make a single sound.

Deathly silence. Terrifying silence!

Blumer stared terrified at Linley, still hovering in mid-air. At this moment, Linley's cold, remorseless dark golden eyes were fixed upon him. Blumer felt as though he could die at any moment. This utmost sensation of terror caused him to run even closer towards the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson.

Silence. No one dared to speak.

"Drip!" A single drop of bright red blood dripped down from the tip of Bloodviolet, landing on the dueling platform and splattering on it. In the silence, that clear sound rang out loudly.

This was the blood of Kenyon.

Kenyon was standing at the edge of the dueling platform, in miserable shape. Controlling his muscles and battle-qi, he sealed his wound and stopped the flow of blood. But he didn't dare fight against Linley again.

He was a Saint-level, true. But he was 'only' a mid-stage Saint-level. In terms of their comparative levels of enlightenment, he was far lower than Linley.

"Master Linley," Johann finally spoke. His voice echoed in the Colosseum, seeming to come out of nowhere, causing more than half the people to turn to him. His face still covered in smiles, Emperor Johann said, "Although I knew you were a powerful warrior, I had no idea that your talent in this field was not one whit inferior to your talent in stone sculpting."

Emperor Johann's words visibly eased the tension.

Just then, Linley's vicious demeanor had caused those eighty thousand onlookers to not even dare breathe loudly. But as soon as Emperor Johann finished speaking, the entire Colosseum became filled with the sound of countless conversations.

"Master Linley? Ah! Could it be that he is that youngest-ever grandmaster sculptor?"

"Master Linley belongs to the Holy Union. I heard that Count Wharton had originally come from the Holy Union as well. Dragonblood Warriors truly are formidable!"

"Master Linley is so young! When he was sixteen, he created 'Awakening From the Dream', and only eleven years have passed since then. A twenty-seven-year-old Saint-level combatant. Doesn't that make him even more incredible than Lord Olivier?"



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Countless conversations regarding Linley could be heard. Linley had appeared out of nowhere. His status as a master sculptor was well known to many aficionados of stone sculptures.

This was an individual who was almost on the same level as Master Proulx.

And now, this young master sculptor, only twenty-seven years old, had defeated in a single blow a Saint-level expert who was a personal disciple of the War God!

Unavoidably, many people began to compare him and Olivier.

Compared to Olivier, Linley was even younger.

"My young friend Linley, that technique you used just now should have been derived from your insight into the Laws of the Wind, yes?" the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, spoke, his voice ringing from the judge's platform.

As soon as Haydson spoke, everyone else in the Colosseum fell silent. What did the Monolithic Sword Saint wish to discuss with this genius, Linley?

“It was indeed, Mr. Haydson.” A calm reply from Linley.

“Might I ask what the name of this technique is?” The Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, was a man devoted to his training and focused on reaching the Deity-level. Haydson was very much interested in the mysteries gleaned by other Saint-level experts. Perhaps by doing so, he might suddenly gain some new insights and have a breakthrough.

“The name of this technique is Rippling Wind.” Linley didn’t try to hide it.

In order to learn a powerful technique, one must possess a certain level of understanding and insight with regards to the Laws of a certain element. Without that level of understanding, no matter how clearly you explained a technique to someone, they wouldn’t be able to learn it.

Still standing in mid-air, Linley glanced at the distant Kenyon. Calmly, he said, “Your name is Kenyon, correct?”

At first, Kenyon had thought Linley was someone who wasn’t even at the Saint level. Naturally, he was furious when Linley rebuked and cursed at him. But now, he knew that Linley was more powerful than he was.

Although he was still rather angry, in his heart, Kenyon already viewed Linley as someone on the same level as himself, or perhaps at an even higher level.

“I am.” Kenyon nodded slightly.

“Mr. Kenyon, given your level of power, you should have been able to clearly discern the seriousness of my younger brother’s injury. Given that you knew exactly how wounded he was, you shouldn’t have said the words you said. Remember. As a judge, you have to be at least somewhat impartial. We had admitted defeat, after all. You can’t go too far!”

As soon as Linley finished speaking these words coldly, he flew down towards his own squad. Linley was still concerned about his younger brother’s injury.

Having been rebuked by Linley yet again, Kenyon felt rather embarrassed.

But he knew that he had acted wrongly here. Just then, the other side had admitted defeat. He did indeed go a bit too far by acting in such a manner.



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“Wharton, are you okay?” Linley said worriedly as he returned to his human form, rushing to his little brother’s side and crouching on one knee.

Right now, quite a few people were surrounding him. Even Nina had ignored everything and rushed over.

“Lord Linley.” A light-style magus next to them smiled. “Don’t worry. I just utilized recovery magic on him. Lord Wharton’s wounds are already half-healed. Given Lord Wharton’s natural healing abilities, in ten days or half a month, he should be totally fine.”

“Big Bro, I feel much better.” Wharton was able to speak fairly easily now.

Linley finally calmed down.

At the same time, he felt rather satisfied with the preparations the Colosseum had made. Linley knew exactly how effective light-style magi were in treating wounds. Generally speaking, low-ranking magi would only be able to treat superficial wounds. Only powerful light-style magi would be able to heal broken bones or internal injuries.

And of course, the most powerful light-style magi could even fully restore anyone who had not yet died to their peak condition. For example, when Linley had received the Divine Boon at the Radiant Temple, that divine power had carried just a bit of healing power with it, but that little bit had been enough to fully restore Linley’s body to peak condition, healing all of his broken bones.

This sort of regenerative ability was very formidable.

“Everyone!”

At this moment, the tournament organizer, that silver-haired old man, reappeared on the dueling platform. His face covered in smiles, he said, “I imagine everyone has had an incredible time watching this battle today. Haha. Even our dueling platform has been destroyed as a result of this battle.”

The eighty thousand viewers stared at the shattered, crater-marked dueling

platform, and they all began to laugh as well.

This duel today had absolutely been worth watching.

Not only had they seen a competition between two ultimate geniuses, they even had had a chance to see the terrifying power of Wharton's older brother, Linley. He had, in one blow, defeated Kenyon.

Although the exchange between Linley and Kenyon was very brief, the 'value' of watching that exchange was much higher than that of the battle between Wharton and Blumer. After all, this was a battle between Saint-levels. Many people would live their entire lives without having a chance to witness such a battle.

"And the results of today's duel, I'm sure everyone will agree, are without question. I announce..." The silver-haired old man's words came to a halt, as he stared at the air above him.

Not just him. The tens of thousands of people sitting on the side of the judge's stand were all staring at a glowing line streaking at high speed through the air towards them.

In the blink of an eye, the streak of light arrived at the Colosseum.

"Saint-level!"

The Colosseum once again was filled with excited shouts. Yet another Saint-level expert had appeared.

This man wore simple, sackcloth clothes, and seemed very calm. But his eyes seemed to blaze with the light of the stars. His hair was black mixed with streaks of white, but judging from his face, one could tell without a doubt that this was not an old man; rather, this man was very young.

"Who is this person?"

"Don't recognize'm. His hair is turning white. Which Saint-level expert is this?"



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The stands were filled with the sound of discussions being held. It seemed

most people were surprisingly unable to recognize who this Saint-level was, that had just flown here. After all, many people had seen some of the more famous Saint-level experts.

The young man flew towards Blumer.

“Second brother, what happened?” the young man asked.

“Big Brother!” Blumer’s astonished, overjoyed voice rang out.

This exchange seemed to have lit a fire within the audience at the Colosseum. This youngster with white and black hair, dressed in a simple sackcloth attire, was the Prodigy Sword Saint, Olivier!

“Olivier. Wait, that can’t be. Olivier’s hair should be brownish-black, and he likes wearing white clothes.”

“Olivier. He was such a marvel to behold. How did he become like this?”

“I can tell for certain that this is Olivier. Compared to how he looked when he last battled against Lord Dillon, his appearance is almost identical. Only, his hair looks different, and it seems his aura is different as well.”



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Right. His aura was different.

No wonder those eighty thousand viewers were unable to recognize him. In the past, Olivier’s aura was astonishingly sharp, like a sword that had been unleashed from its scabbard. In addition, he wore a pure white robe.

His handsome face and his fierce aura had made Olivier famous throughout the imperial capital.

But the current Olivier had changed dramatically compared to before.

The current Olivier didn’t have a fierce aura, and his hair, now part-white, seemed aged. Olivier had never used to dress in sackcloth before either.

“He is Olivier?” Linley looked at Olivier as well.

Yale nodded next to Linley. “Right. According to my clan’s intelligence, in the

years after he reached the Saint level, Olivier had been roving about the various Empires and engaging in training. According to the predictions of our intelligence unit, he should have defeated many Saint-level experts.”

Linley nodded slightly.

As soon as he had seen Olivier, Linley had the sense... that this Olivier person was an extremely terrifying expert. Compared to Stehle of the Radiant Church, he was even more formidable.

“Has he come for the purpose of doing battle on behalf of his little brother?” Linley immediately began to quietly chant the words to a magic spell.

Olivier was extremely famous. Given his reputation, Linley definitely wouldn’t underestimate Olivier, nor did he dare to be insufficiently cautious.

A gust of wind suddenly swirled about Linley.

Wind spell of the ninth rank – Windshadow technique!



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Olivier finished listening to his younger brother’s description of this battle. Blumer intentionally made the situation sound even worse. “Big Brother, that Linley bullied me with his superior power. If it wasn’t for the assistance of my elder fellow apprentice, I’m afraid...”

Olivier frowned.

The Akerlund clan was actually a very ordinary, common clan. Their parents had died early on, and Olivier had to rely on himself to protect Blumer and help raise Blumer.

Blumer was Olivier’s only family member. The two brothers shared a very deep love for each other.

“Kenyon.” Olivier glanced at the nearby Kenyon. “Thank you. I, Olivier, will definitely remember your benevolence in assisting us.”

Kenyon hurriedly said, “Olivier, no need. Blumer is my younger fellow apprentice. I can’t just sit and watch.”

Olivier smiled at Kenyon, then stared coldly at his younger brother. He rebuked, "Second brother, I told you long ago, unless the situation is a matter of life or death, you are not to use that forbidden technique. Given your current level of understanding, you are far from being able to use it properly. Do you know how harmful that most powerful attack was to you? The damage it caused was more severe than that of your broken arm!"

Blumer lowered his head.

In order to defeat Wharton, in the end, he had utilized a forbidden technique, and the damage done to himself by this forbidden technique wasn't something that light magic could heal. When Olivier had taught him this technique, he had instructed him to only use it in life-or-death situations.

"Elder brother. I am sorry." Blumer knew that Olivier was looking out for his interests.

Olivier shook his head and sighed, then turned to look at the distant Linley. A fierce look appeared in his eyes, previously as tranquil as the depths of the seas. Olivier flew directly over.

"Olivier, wait!" Knowing things were taking a turn for the worse, Emperor Johann immediately spoke out.

"Your Imperial Majesty, I will not spare someone who tried to kill my younger brother. Your Imperial Majesty, it's best if you don't get involved in this matter." Olivier didn't give Johann any face at all.

Emperor Johann didn't say anything else either. He understood Olivier's temperament very well.

But as far as Johann was concerned, both Linley and Olivier were important members of the Empire. He didn't want these two geniuses to battle each other.

Olivier hovered in mid-air, his long robes fluttering about him. His cold, fierce gaze was on Linley. "Linley, come out!" This explosive shout rocked the Colosseum like a thunderbolt, echoing nonstop within it.

"Come out!" "Come out!" "Come out!"

Everyone in the Colosseum held their breaths. Good heavens. The tickets they had bought were absolutely worth it. They had already seen two battles, but now, it seemed as though they were going to see an even more exciting one.

The eighty thousand pairs of eyes in the Colosseum all swung towards Linley.

Linley vs. Olivier

“Linley, come out!”

Olivier’s explosive shout still echoed in the Colosseum, but Linley seemed to be deaf to it. He remained on one knee besides his younger brother’s side, discussing something with his younger brother, seemingly not having heard Olivier’s shout at all.

Olivier, standing in mid-air, couldn’t help but frown.

“What is Master Linley doing? Didn’t he hear it?”

“Impossible. Maybe he is afraid of Olivier?”



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The people in the Colosseum were puzzled by Linley’s lack of reaction. After letting out this angry shout, Olivier fell silent, staring coldly from mid-air at Linley.

After finishing his conversation with his little brother, Linley turned and glanced upwards at the mid-air Olivier. In that instant...

Their gazes met! One on the ground, the other mid-air.

Their gazes seemed to clash in the air like physical blows.

“Olivier.” A hint of a smile was on Linley’s face. He calmly said, “Ever since arriving in the O’Brien Empire, I’ve heard people praise you as the Prodigy Sword Saint. To tell the truth? Given that you reached the Saint level at age forty, I don’t see what makes you a ‘prodigy’.”

Olivier’s forehead furrowed slightly.

The combative nature of Linley’s words caused all eighty thousand onlookers

to grow excited. Good heavens. These two geniuses were really being antagonistic towards each other.

This would be the true duel between geniuses.

A duel between Linley and Olivier would clearly be on a entirely different level from the duel between Blumer and Wharton. The battle between the older brothers definitely would be a duel between two of the utmost geniuses in the entire Yulan continent.

This duel was about to start at any moment.

Linley suddenly rose directly into the air above the dueling platform. Only after he came to a stop did the blur beneath him slowly disappear.

What terrifying speed.

“Rumble...” Black draconic scales quickly covered Linley’s entire body, and ferocious spikes erupted from his spine, his knees, his elbows, and his forehead. That black, scale-covered draconic tail flashed with a cold, gloomy light.

Floating in the air, Linley stared at Olivier with those dark golden eyes.

This was the first time he had seen such a terrifying transformation. Even the normally calm and composed Olivier had a flash of surprise in his eyes, but he quickly returned to his usual calm.

“Saint-level Dragonblood Warrior?” Olivier looked at Linley, a terrifying aura of battle-lust emanating from him. “You aren’t at the Saint-level pre-transformation. It seems that your current condition isn’t the most powerful condition and time for a Dragonblood Warrior. Pity... such a pity...”

Olivier truly wanted to have a battle with one of the legendary peak-stage Saint-level Dragonblood Warriors.

“Olivier, a person should know their limits,” Linley’s cold voice rang out in the Colosseum. “Do you think the likes of you are a match for the Supreme Warriors?”

The two genius Saint-levels stared at each other in mid-air. Everyone held their breaths, carefully watching this never-before-seen battle.

“Linley!”

Olivier extended his hand to his back. On Olivier's back, there were two longswords; one of them, a translucent sword, appeared very similar to Icedream. The other sword was pitch black.

"Against you, using the Lightshadow Sword technique is enough." Olivier drew the longsword that was as translucent as a block of ice. This sword really was identical to Blumer's; it was also an 'Icedream sword'.

With a flip of his hand, that devilish-looking Bloodviolet flexible sword appeared.

"Enough talk. Power is demonstrated through actions, not words." Linley paid no attention to Olivier's arrogance at all.

A hint of self-confidence was in Olivier's eyes. Staring at the Icedream sword in his hands, he murmured, "After I reached the Saint level and defeated Dillon, I have roamed the various countries. In total, I met eighteen Saint-level experts, and won each battle. Unfortunately, not a single one of them was able to match me in speed."

A series of surprised murmurs from the eighty thousand onlookers.

No one had known that Olivier had subsequently done battle against eighteen Saint-level experts.

Olivier looked at Linley, a hint of self-confidence in his eyes. "In general, someone who cannot match me in speed will definitely lose." As he spoke, the Icedream sword in Olivier's hand began to shine as a white light began to swirl about the surface of the sword.

Seeing this, Linley began to grow cautious.

Linley could remember clearly how when Blumer used this Lightshadow Sword technique, the light on the Icedream sword had been golden. Only afterwards, when Blumer had used the 'forbidden' technique, did Icedream carry a hint of white light within it.

Although it was just a hint of white light, the attack power of Icedream had multiplied several dozen times.

Originally, Icedream had not been able to harm Wharton, but afterwards, it

had been able to pierce through Wharton's palm, and then pierce past the scales on Wharton's chest. And that was just a hint of white light.

But Olivier's? It was pure white.

"The power of this attack is most likely far more powerful than Blumer's all-out desperation attack." Linley naturally was prepared for this.

"Linley, I'm afraid that today, the world will have lost another genius," Olivier said in a quiet, calm voice, and then the white light began to flash repeatedly.

With each flash of white light, another shadow-Olivier appeared in the air above the dueling platform. The power and efficacy of this white light clearly was much higher than Blumer's technique; in the blink of an eye, 108 shadow-Oliviers had appeared in the sky.

Everyone was shocked speechless.

"Third bro." Yale and Reynolds were so nervous that they had begun to sweat already. Wharton, Barker and his brothers, Rebecca, Leena, and Jenne also watched nervously as well.

The injured Blumer, by contrast, watched with confidence.

"Blumer, your older brother's Lightshadow sword has already reached the perfected level, filling the skies with his shadows." The seated judge, Monolithic Sword Saint Haydson, smiled calmly at Blumer.

Blumer's face was filled with confidence.



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The demonically ferocious-looking Linley, standing in mid-air, was now surrounded by 108 shadow-Oliviers. Linley had to admit that this speed was absolutely astonishing.

"Linley, are you ready?" Olivier actually gave Linley a warning.

Clearly, Olivier was feeling extremely confident.

Linley only chuckled calmly.

A sudden white flash, utterly piercing to the eye. Even Linley had to squint, but right at that moment, the Icedream sword, covered with white light, reached Linley's head, piercing directly through it.

“Ah!”

Everyone let out simultaneous cries of alarm. Did the mighty Linley die just like that?

But not a hint of blood came out from Linley's head, despite having been pierced through by Icedream. Suddenly, 'Linley' slowly disappeared. It had just been a shadow!

“You are indeed quite fast. Unfortunately, in front of me, you aren't qualified to be arrogant about it!” Linley's voice rang out from the air a hundred meters away.

Olivier stared at the distant Linley, his face growing solemn.

“How incredibly fast!” The eyes of the Monolithic Sword Saint Haydson, watching from the judge's platform, shone brightly. Linley's speed wasn't one whit inferior to Olivier's.

A wave of surprised murmurs filled the Colosseum. And then, silence once again.

The viewers all felt as though their very souls had been shocked by this exciting battle.

“Is that so?” Olivier's face grew cold. He had never met anyone faster than him. As for someone on par with his speed, the only one to date had been the Monolithic Sword Saint. He didn't believe this youngster Linley could match him.

After all, his speed was so fast that it had already exceeded human limits.

This sword technique and movement technique was based on Olivier's insights into the Elemental Laws of Light. This movement technique, in principle, could reach the speed of light itself. However, due to the limits of his body and his battle-qi, he could only reach his current level of speed.

“You don't believe me?” Linley chuckled.

Another flash of white light. Linley began to move as well, as both reached a terrifying level of speed.

Shadowed blurs everywhere!

Countless shadows and blurs appeared everywhere. The eighty thousand watchers felt their vision grow blurry. They simply couldn't tell which of the shadows were the true bodies of Linley and Olivier. The two had simply reached an absolutely terrifying level of speed.

"What astonishing speed." As they really began to compete, Linley couldn't help but feel surprised. "If it wasn't for the fact that I had cast the Windshadow spell in advance, I wouldn't be able to match this Olivier in speed."

Linley was fast, true.

But the insights that Olivier had gained into the Elemental Laws of Light were extremely powerful. However, supported by the most powerful speed-enhancing spell, the Windshadow spell, Linley's speed had been instantly raised to a level equivalent to Olivier's.

"Swish!"

A deep gouge suddenly appeared on the dueling platform; clearly, it had been cut by a longsword. But then in the blink of an eye, a huge crater appeared with a thundering sound.

The eighty thousand viewers stared fixedly with wide eyes, not wanting to miss a thing.

"Motherfucker, this is real speed. Our Academy's teacher keeps on bragging, but compared with these guys? He's just a child who has barely learned to walk." Watching this battle, a youngster was so excited that his eyes were turning bloodshot.

These eighty thousand viewers had perhaps never seen this sort of high-speed battle before in their entire lives.

This sort of battle would only occur when the two combatants were equally matched in speed. If one of them was too slow, the battle would have ended instantly.

“Bam!”

Linley’s black draconic tail brushed past Olivier’s clothes, viciously smashing against the dueling platform, causing every single inch of the platform to crack. In the next instant, Linley and Olivier both disappeared.

The battle was so high-speed that the onlookers could only barely see some shadows and blurs when the two lowered their speeds to exchange blows. But once the combatants returned to their maximum speed, not even their shadows could be seen!

“Whoosh!”

A tornado seemed to have sprung into being out of nowhere in the middle of the Colosseum. As the wind howled, the eighty thousand onlookers could just barely make out two hazy figures standing in the middle of the wind, staring at each other.

The fierce wind gradually died down.

Olivier looked solemnly at Linley, the Icedream sword in his hands gleaming with all seven colors of the rainbow, like a beautiful illusion.

As for the demonic Linley, his draconic tail quivered behind him, and the Bloodviolet sword in his hand was covered with a strange violet light.

A suppressive aura filled the Colosseum.

“I admit that your speed is no lower than mine,” Olivier spoke out.

Linley’s dark golden eyes were fixed on his opponent. He said calmly, “And your speed isn’t any lower than mine either.” After having competed just then, these two experts found that neither could gain an advantage over the other based on speed.

If they continued to compete in such a manner, there would be no end.

“Dare you face my attacks head on?” Olivier stared Linley, a surge of an aura of battle-lust erupting forth from him.

“Why wouldn’t I dare?” Linley’s body began to emit that same ferocious battle-lust.

The eighty thousand onlookers were so excited that they were beginning to quiver. Good heavens. These two experts were going to fight head on now. Even the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, was watching carefully.

As for Blumer, Wharton, and the others, they were each eager to see their older brother achieve victory.

Linley and Olivier stared at each other in mid-air. In the same instant, the two of them moved in a direct line towards the other.

“Bang!” Sudden sonic booms erupted from them as they reached a terrifying level of speed.

While charging at Linley, Olivier’s body seemed to have fragmented into seven or eight people, and the Icedream sword in his hands had transformed into ten million sword-shadows.

“You want to compete in sword speed?”

The Bloodviolet sword in Linley’s hand flickered, then in the blink of an eye, Linley’s body seemed to have been surrounded by a tornado while at the same time, countless flashes of violet light simultaneously struck at Olivier.

“Clang!” “Clang!” “Clang!” “Clang!”

Countless clashing sounds could be heard, and then, Linley’s iron-whip-like draconic tail turned into a blur as well, smashing viciously against Olivier.

“Clang.” The Icedream sword in Olivier’s hand slammed against Linley’s draconic tail, then he flew backwards at high speed.

The Two Geniuses

Olivier immediately flew backwards to the viewing platform, staring at Linley with a hint of surprise in his eyes.

But then, Olivier began to laugh loudly. “Great, great, great! The speed of your sword attacks actually can match my ‘Phantom Dream Sword’ technique.”

“You aren’t bad either. You were actually able to block my ‘Rippling Wind’ technique,” Linley’s cold voice rang out.

Profound Truths of the Wind – Rippling Wind.

Lightshadow Sword – Phantom Dream Sword.

The strength of these two techniques were equal.

After praising their opponents, the two geniuses fell silent, carefully watching the other. Clearly, this exchange had resulted in both men viewing the other as equals.

The tension in the Colosseum was so thick, it could be sliced with a knife. The terrifying, repressive aura caused the eighty thousand viewers to feel as though they didn’t even dare to breathe.

“If you can receive this next attack of mine, I can spare your life.” A hint of appreciation towards Linley could be seen in Olivier’s eyes. “By receiving this next attack, you’ll be demonstrating that you are qualified to be considered a rival of mine.”

As soon as he said these words, Barker and the others actually began to curse.

“Fuck his granny, this Olivier wasn’t able to show any superiority over Lord Linley at all, and he actually dares say something like...‘by receiving this next attack, you’ll be qualified to be my rival’? What sort of bullshit is this?” Gates cursed loudly.

Barker and the other brothers were muttering unhappily as well.

Indeed, these words from Olivier made many of the people watching this battle unhappy. They had clearly seen how Olivier hadn't been able to seize any advantage. How could he say such a thing? This was simply too arrogant.

"Rival?" Linley laughed calmly. "If you can take this next sword of mine, you'll be qualified to be my rival as well."

The two said the exact same things to each other.

"Haha... then have a taste of the power of my 'Sword of the Aurora'!" Olivier laughed loudly. And then, he flew once more at high speed directly towards Linley.

Linley laughed coldly.

Linley, too, began to prepare the second stage of the Profound Truths of the Wind – Tempos of the Wind. This was a single-target sword attack, relying on ultimate speed and power.

"BOOM!" Sonic booms erupted.

Linley's ferocious draconic tail swaying behind him, Linley transformed into a blur as he also charged straight forward, the Bloodviolet sword in his hands transforming into a brilliant violet light.

The brilliant white aura covering Olivier's Icedream sword suddenly expanded dramatically, transforming Icedream and making it as dazzling as the sun itself.

The piercing white light forced everyone watching the battle to unconsciously narrow their eyes.

The most powerful attack of the Lightshadow Sword technique – Sword of the Aurora!

The most powerful attack of Linley's Profound Truths of the Wind – Tempos of the Wind!

That devilish violet light moved as fast and as ferociously as a bolt of lightning, but at the same time it carried with it the gentleness of the spring wind. These totally opposite auras were manifested at the same time with this attack.

That sort of strange tempo caused many people to feel a strange fear in their hearts.

“What a powerful sword attack!” The Monolithic Sword Saint Haydson’s eyes lit up. He could completely sense how powerful this attack by Linley was.

This sort of strange, uniquely intersecting tempo caused a natural wind-edge to form on the surface of Linley’s Bloodviolet sword. Or, to put it more accurately, it was a spatial edge.

The devilish violet light. The piercing white light. They intersected in the middle of the air above the Colosseum.

“Boom!” The terrifying force of the collision blasted out in every direction. The dueling platform below was slashed open by countless invisible blades, with many gouges appearing on its surface. At the same time, a frighteningly powerful wave of force emanated in each direction, causing the eighty thousand viewers to sway and stumble.

“Crunch!” Some of the cups located near the edges of the dueling platform were actually shattered by the force of the wind.

Those onlookers held on for dear life against their stone seats as their bodies swayed. Only after that wild blast of wind left did the Colosseum slowly return to its normal calm. But to the shock of many of the watchers, many of their outer layer of clothes had been blown off of them by the wind.

What terrifying force.

Everyone stared in astonishment at the two experts in mid-air. At this time, Olivier and Linley were silently staring at each other in mid-air.

Tempos of the Wind. Sword of the Aurora.

Once again, they were equally matched.

Olivier stared at Linley, his gaze slowly brightening. A hint of a smile actually appeared on Olivier’s face. “Linley, what was the name of that sword technique you just used?”

Linley didn’t try to dissemble. “Profound Truths of the Wind, second stage – Tempos of the Wind.”

“Tempos of the Wind... Tempos of the Wind...” Thinking back to the attack Linley had just used, Olivier looked at Linley with eyes filled with approval. “Linley, I can hardly believe that you are a young grandmaster sculptor as well. To be so accomplished, but not yet be even thirty years old. I admire you.”

Olivier’s attitude towards Linley had totally changed.

“I previously said that if you could withstand this blow from me, I would spare your life. I will keep my word. From today onwards, your name has now been added to my list of rivals. I eagerly anticipate your growth and development,” Olivier said with a smile.

Linley frowned.

This Olivier was simply too arrogant.

Barker and his brothers were standing below them. Gates, the most irascible of the lot, immediately jumped to his feet. “Fuck his granny! Olivier, you didn’t beat our Lord. How dare you prattle on and swagger about like a bushy-tailed wolf! Fuck, I hate people like you.”

This loud shout caused the countless onlookers to be unable to control their laughter.

It must be said that many people agreed with Gates’ words.

The words that Olivier had just said were the words an elder expert would say to a junior. They had a lecturing aura to it. He had even said, ‘I look forward to your growth’ and ‘I will spare your life’.

If Olivier had truly won, others would acknowledge these words as having bearing and composure.

But he hadn’t won. Nobody could sense that Olivier had held even the slightest bit of advantage. If they continued fighting, it was hard to say who would win.

“Hrmph.” Olivier sneered coldly. His cold, gloomy eyes swept the surrounding area, and the Colosseum immediately fell silent.

Olivier looked at Linley. Calmly, he said, “Six years ago, you would indeed have been able to stalemate me. But now...”

“You just barely qualify for me to utilize the obsidian sword. But if I use it then today you, a genius, would definitely lose your life,” Olivier’s calm voice echoed in the Colosseum.

Only now did most people in the Colosseum remember... Olivier had two swords on his back. The Icedream sword was only one of them.

Obsidian sword?

“Obsidian sword? Olivier, you’ve truly mastered it?” At the judge’s stand, the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, spoke out, attracting the attention of everyone present.

From the looks of it, the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, had some sort of prior relationship with Olivier.

Olivier turned to look at the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson. In a calm voice, he said, “Mr. Haydson, thank you for the advice you gave me six years ago. It resulted in me gaining certain insights. Three years of battles, followed by three years of quiet meditation in the desolate mountains. I have now mastered the ‘obsidian sword’, which is even more powerful than the ‘Lightshadow’ technique.”

The Colosseum was filled with cries of astonishment.

“Even more powerful than the Lightshadow Sword technique? No wonder Lord Olivier said that he was sparing Master Linley’s life.”

“That year when he defeated Lord Dillon, Lord Olivier had used the Lightshadow Sword technique. Back then, Lord Olivier only had a single sword on his back, but now he has two. Ten years. He really has improved.”

Many people sighed in amazement at Olivier’s prowess. The power he had demonstrated just now wasn’t his true power. How terrifying was Olivier truly?

“My Big Brother, he...” Wharton knew that Linley was fighting for his sake, and now, he was beginning to worry for Linley.

Wharton was worried, but Barker and his brothers, on the contrary, weren’t worried at all.

“Wharton, his Lordship hasn’t revealed his true power yet.” Barker laughed as

he glanced at Wharton. “When his Lordship sparred with you, he only used the Bloodviolet flexible sword. He didn’t dare test his true attack against you.”

“Right. Linley has an even more terrifying adamantine heavy sword,” Zassler said solemnly.

Having been with Linley for so long, Zassler and the Barker brothers knew exactly how terrifyingly powerful the adamantine heavy sword was. When Linley was only at the peak-stage of the ninth rank, his usage of the ‘Hundred Layered Waves’ technique with the adamantine heavy sword would have been irresistible by even Saint-level Undying Warriors despite them being known for their defense.

Even most mid-stage Saint-level experts would probably suffer a severe injury.

And now, Linley’s base power and battle-qi were all at the Saint level. If he were to once more utilize his ‘Profound Truths of the Earth’, most likely even peak-stage Saint-level experts wouldn’t be able to take a blow from him.

After all, the vibrational attacks that Linley had developed based on his insights was simply too terrifying. Battle-qi and muscle power virtually did nothing to defend against it.

“Linley, I eagerly anticipate your future challenge,” Olivier said with a calm laugh.

Olivier was also someone who pursued the peak of power. A good rival was hard to find. For Linley to be so powerful in his twenties meant that in the future, he would definitely be a good rival for Olivier.

“Lord Olivier really does have the bearing of an expert.” Many people sighed in praise. But Blumer, located near the judge’s stand, was unhappy. “Why can’t elder brother simply just kill Linley and get it over with?”

The spikes protruding from Linley’s head gleamed with a metallic light.

“Olivier.” Linley’s dark golden eyes stared at Olivier. “I told you long ago. A person should know their limits. Do you think your obsidian sword is very powerful?”

“Hrm?” Olivier’s face changed as he looked at Linley. Linley didn’t know what was good for him!

But Linley extended his hand. Suddenly, an astonishing azure-black heavy sword appeared in his palm.

“My most powerful weapon... the adamantine heavy sword.” Linley stared at Olivier. “Once I use the adamantine heavy sword, even I can’t fully control its power. I might kill you.”

Olivier started.

The Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, was stunned as well. Blumer stared at the mid-air Linley in astonishment as well. The eighty thousand viewers had all fallen silent.

In mid-air, the ferocious Dragonformed Linley wielded his adamantine heavy sword and stared coldly at Olivier. “From what you are saying, it sounds like your obsidian sword is very powerful. I want to see for myself if your obsidian sword is more powerful, or if my adamantine heavy sword is more powerful.”

“Adamantine heavy sword? Adamantine?” Olivier and Haydson were both secretly shocked.

The legendary material that supposedly even Deity-level experts would find difficult to break?

“Haha... good. Wonderful.” Olivier began to laugh loudly. “I take back my earlier words. I, too, want to see if your adamantine heavy sword is everything you claim it is. Linley, be careful. My obsidian sword might just claim your life.”

As he spoke, Olivier sheathed his Icedream sword, then slowly drew out his obsidian sword. The obsidian sword was the same size and shape as the Icedream sword, but its pitch-black surface looked very ordinary. However, when Olivier placed the obsidian sword in front of him, a layer of cold, dark light began to flow over its surface.

That black light seemed capable of devouring everything around it.

“The obsidian sword’s techniques were developed based on my insights into the Elemental Laws of Darkness.” Olivier stared coldly at Linley.

Linley wielded the adamantine heavy sword in his hands. Because it had been struck by heavenly lightning when it had been forged, the adamantine heavy sword's surface gleamed with that azure light.

"The adamantine heavy sword's techniques were developed based on my insights into the Elemental Laws of the Earth." Linley's dark golden eyes were fixed upon the opponent as well.

One wielded an obsidian sword. The other wielded the adamantine heavy sword.

Two ultimate geniuses. Eighty thousand pairs of eyes in the Colosseum were focused on them. The entire Colosseum seemed to be holding its breath. Both Blumer and Wharton began to grow anxious and nervous.

Right now, no one knew who would win; Linley, or Olivier!

"Bang!" "Bang!"

Two terrifying sonic booms erupted, as the two charged directly towards each other from hundreds of meters away. But just at this moment, the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, who had been seated at the judge's stand, suddenly disappeared from his seat. He took three steps in mid-air, moving as fast as lightning, suddenly interposing between the two.

"Stay your hands!"

An earth-colored ripple of power erupted forth from the body of the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, striking simultaneously against Linley and Olivier. Linley had the sensation of being struck by countless meteors, and his body was repelled backwards by several dozen meters. Olivier had also been knocked backwards in the same way.

Linley and Olivier both turned to stare at Haydson.

The Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, laughed calmly as he looked at each of them. "Linley. Olivier. Both of you are incredible geniuses of the entire Yulan continent. You are both so young. Judging from your words, both the adamantine heavy sword technique and the obsidian sword technique are extremely vicious, dangerous sword techniques, which even you two are unable to fully control. If this battle were truly to continue, then one of you will

definitely die, or perhaps even both of you. For two such geniuses to fall would be a huge loss to the entire Yulan continent. I suggest... that we bring this duel to an end for now.”

The Challenge

Stop fighting?

The eighty thousand viewers all began to mumble in unison upon hearing these words from the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson. Some even began to quietly curse him.

Linley and Olivier were definitely two of the most brilliant men in the entirety of the Yulan continent. Many warriors would literally be willing to give up their lives if it meant they could see such a battle between two such genius Saint-level experts.

But just as the battle was getting to the most exciting part, the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, had popped out!

How could they not be angry?

But the person stopping the battle was Haydson, the number one Saint-level in the world!

“It’s best if we have this battle come to an end here and now.” Housekeeper Hiri’s forehead was covered in sweat.

Not just Housekeeper Hiri. Hillman, Wharton, and the others were all worrying for Linley as well. Olivier’s performance hadn’t been one whit inferior to Linley’s, and that obsidian sword technique seemed to be very strange as well.

Linley’s ‘Profound Truths of the Earth’ was powerful, true.

But would the attack that Olivier had developed based on his understanding of the Elemental Laws of Darkness necessarily be any weaker than Linley’s ‘Profound Truths of the Earth’? Hadn’t Olivier himself said that he was unable to control the power of the obsidian sword once unleashed?

Because the Monolithic Sword Saint Haydson had suddenly interrupted, Linley

and Olivier were standing on opposite ends of the Colosseum in mid-air, staring at each other, with Haydson between them.

Three Saint-level experts. Two were ultimate geniuses, while the third was reputed to be the most powerful Saint-level expert in the world.

“Stop fighting?” Olivier glanced at Haydson.

Linley glanced at Haydson as well.

“This Haydson’s power really is astonishing. That technique he displayed just now definitely wasn’t just based on pure battle-qi. It should have been some sort of defensive technique developed through his mastery of the Laws of the Earth.”

Linley could fully sense that the earth-colored wave Haydson had emitted earlier contained layers of wave-like energy.

“However, he wouldn’t necessarily be able to withstand my ‘Profound Truths of the Earth’.” Linley was still extremely confident in the power of his ultimate attack.

In truth, when charging against each other just now, both Linley and Olivier had both been in the charge-up phase.

At Linley and Olivier’s levels, as peak-stage Saint-level experts, they wouldn’t waste any energy at all. Both the ‘Profound Truths of the Earth’ as well as Olivier’s attack would wait until when the blows landed on the opponent before suddenly allowing their power to erupt!

Many of the victims of the ‘Profound Truths of the Earth’, when first struck by the adamantine heavy sword, initially hadn’t sensed any danger at all. But then suddenly...

They would sense layers upon layers of vibrational wave attacks transmitting into their internal organs.

Just then, Haydson had been able to push aside both Linley and Olivier with one technique, true. But that was because neither Linley nor Olivier had used their ultimate attacks against Haydson. Otherwise, it wouldn’t have been so easy for Haydson to block them.

“Haha, Olivier, Linley.” Emperor Johann stood up now. Under the gaze of eighty thousand people, Emperor Johann walked off the judge’s platform and said in a loud voice, “Olivier, Linley, this battle between the two of you has already been an incredible sight, and expanded our horizons. What’s more, neither of you have a serious grudge against each other that can only be resolved in death.”

Emperor Johann didn’t wish for either Linley or Olivier to die.

If these two geniuses remained alive, then the O’Brien Empire’s influence in the Yulan continent would be even stronger.

Linley and Olivier glanced at each other.

“Fine.” Olivier nodded, laughing calmly. “When brother Linley had received my ‘Lightshadow Sword’ attack, I already had lost my desire to continue fighting. However, I was partially at fault in this affair as well...” Olivier looked at Linley.

“Brother Linley’s power exceeded my expectations. I didn’t expect that the sword techniques he revealed at the beginning were just the surface of his abilities.” Olivier revealed a smile towards Linley. “I admit, brother Linley’s power is no weaker than my own.”

Clearly, Olivier was indicating a willingness to be friendly towards Linley. He even addressed him as ‘brother Linley’.

The obsidian sword’s technique was extremely powerful, but Linley’s adamantine heavy sword technique was also extremely powerful. If these two geniuses really did insist on going all-out today and fight to the point of death, it really would be a waste and not worth it.

Since Olivier had already spoken in a conciliatory manner, Linley wouldn’t press things either.

After all, he had just entered the O’Brien Empire recently. It was best that he not create too many enemies.

“Then let’s have this battle come to an end,” Linley’s calm voice echoed in the Colosseum, and the eighty thousand viewers understood that the battle between these two ultimate geniuses wouldn’t continue today.

But immediately afterwards...

An ear-splitting, thunderous applause filled the entire Colosseum. All of the watchers were cheering at the top of their lungs. Although the duel had come to an end, they were still uncontrollably excited.

“Olivier!” “Olivier!” “Olivier!”

“Linley!” “Linley!” “Linley!” “Linley!”

Those joyous, thunderous waves of sound assaulted each person’s ears. All of them were cheering for their idols.

In this moment, they had already forgotten that today’s duel had actually been supposed to be between Wharton and Blumer.

Clearly...

Although Wharton and Blumer were geniuses, compared to their respective elder brothers, there was still a huge gap between them in every aspect. The astonishing power and might of Linley and Olivier had thoroughly overawed every single person in the Colosseum.

Seeing the two end their battle, the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, felt very gratified as well. At this time, Linley immediately flew down towards his own side.

The joyous roars of the Colosseum continued unabated. By now, in the eyes of the crowd, Linley had already been vaulted to the same level and status of Olivier. If one factored in Linley’s youth and his mastery of stone sculpting, perhaps Linley was even more worthy than Olivier of the title of ‘Prodigy’.

“Big Bro...” From his seated position, Wharton saw Linley fly down. He immediately called out to him in an excited voice.

“Lord.” Barker and his brothers went to welcome him as well. Jenne, Rebecca, and Leena all let out sighs of relief as they, too, went forward to excitedly welcome him.

Linley returned to his normal human form and put on a long robe.

“Lord, keep fighting! That Olivier definitely isn’t a match for you, your Lordship! I refuse to believe he’ll be able to withstand your ‘Profound Truths of

the Earth' attack," Gates said in a quiet, unhappy voice.

Barker and the others all knew exactly how powerful Linley's 'Profound Truths of the Earth' was. They all believed Linley was capable of winning.

But Linley shook his head and laughed. "Don't underestimate Olivier. For him to be able to create that special attack, Lightshadow Sword, means that the power of his obsidian sword would definitely be astonishing. You must consider this: I was able to gain insights into certain profound truths, but does that mean others are unable to? The Elemental Laws are as vast and boundless as the ocean, and my insights are but a tiny drop of water in that ocean."

Barker and the others all nodded as though they understood.

But right at this moment, a voice rang out from mid-air above the Colosseum. "Mr. Haydson, do you still remember that battle between us six years ago?"

Linley immediately turned his head to stare at the sky. The person who spoke those words was the Prodigy Sword Saint, Olivier. Olivier's eyes were filled with light, and he stared at the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, who was just about to fly downwards.

Haydson came to a halt, turning to look at Olivier. Nodding, he said, "Six years ago, on a night with a full moon. Of course I remember that battle. Your speed left a deep impression on me."

Olivier looked at Haydson. Solemnly, he said, "I roamed through many kingdoms and gained victory in all of my battles against the various experts of the other Empires. I lost to you, and only you. Six years... six full years. During these six years, I developed my blackstone sword technique specifically to deal with you."

The Colosseum instantly went silent.

It seemed as though there was quite a bit of history between these two Saint-level experts.

"Oh, to deal with me?" Haydson laughed calmly. "You believe that your obsidian sword is capable of breaking my defense?"

One of the most important reasons why Haydson was known as the

‘Monolithic Sword Saint’ was because he possessed an extremely powerful defense. Many peak-stage Saint-level experts weren’t able to even break through it, much less injure him.

Olivier thought back to their battle six years ago. That was an utter humiliation!

No matter how he attacked Haydson, he couldn’t scratch Haydson at all. Instead, he was lightly wounded by the impact of each blow. What’s more, Haydson hadn’t been slower than him at all.

Domination!

Although Olivier was also a peak-stage Saint-level, compared to Haydson, he had been utterly dominated. It was as though they were on totally different levels. His reputation as the number one Saint-level expert was definitely not unearned.

“We’ll know whether or not I can break your defense if we give it a test, right? Mr. Haydson, today at the Colosseum, I formally issue you a challenge. If you accept, then in three months, we’ll duel outside the city,” Olivier said.

Olivier had consumed a large amount of his battle-qi today, in his battle against Linley. He was no longer in peak shape.

“Challenge?”

Haydson furrowed his forehead, but a hint of a smile was on his face.

The Colosseum immediately began to be filled with roars of excitement. The Prodigy Sword Saint, Olivier, had openly challenged the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson. Many people were so excited that their faces were turning red.

Everyone turned to look at the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson.

“Fine. I accept.” Haydson smiled and nodded. “Three months from now, I will definitely sample the power of the obsidian sword technique that you developed over these past six years.”

“It definitely will not disappoint you.” Olivier’s face was filled with the utmost confidence.

The smile on Haydson’s face became even brighter.

Six years ago, having been dominated to the point where he had no fighting spirit left, Olivier had learned how powerful Haydson's defense was. But Olivier was still this confident. Olivier was no fool. Clearly, he must really have something he felt he could count on.

"Won't disappoint me? I truly hope it will be as you say." Haydson was filled with some anticipation.

It had been a long time since he had encountered an opponent who could pose a threat to him.

In three short steps, the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, somehow once more appeared at the judge's platform. As for Olivier, he flew to the side of his little brother.

The entire Colosseum was filled with the sound of murmuring discussions.

Linley had suddenly taken to the field of battle and easily defeated Kenyon, and then had fought Olivier to a standstill. And now, Olivier had challenge the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, to a battle.

This chain of events had truly excited them no end.

"Everyone." At this moment, the silver-haired old man returned to the dueling platform. "Just now, I was about to announce the results of the duel. But I didn't expect that Lord Olivier would arrive."

The silver-haired old man's face was covered in smiles. "That made me extremely excited. This was the most exciting day in my long life. Lord Olivier's battle against Lord Linley is something I trust none of you will ever forget for the rest of your lives. Just look at the dueling platform, and then look at those flagpoles."

The battle just now had caused the already-cracked dueling platform to be riddled with gaping holes. Most of the flagpoles around the dueling platform had been snapped in half, and many peoples' clothes had been blown to different corners of the Colosseum. It was a disaster scene.

But this disaster scene made the eighty thousand people begin to laugh.

"Haha, enough talk. Everyone already knows the results of the earlier duel

between Wharton and Blumer. Blumer managed to squeak out a victory by a narrow margin.” The silver-haired old man laughed towards Emperor Johann. “His Imperial Majesty has a few words he wishes to say. I hope everyone will listen closely.”

After speaking, the silver-haired old man left the platform.

Emperor Johann now rose to his feet. Some people in the Colosseum looked towards Emperor Johann, while the others looked at Linley, Olivier, and Haydson, the Saint-level experts.

“Today has been the most exciting day in Our life. Whether it was the duel between Wharton and Blumer, or their brothers, Linley and Olivier, what We witnessed was extremely thrilling.”

Emperor Johann revealed a hint of a smile on his face. “Everyone knows that both Wharton and Blumer have asked for the hand of Our daughter, the Seventh Princess, in marriage. After seeing both of these brilliant young men in action today, We have already made our decision. We have decided that on March 15th, at the Martial Palace, We shall openly announce who will be the one to wed Our Seventh Princess.”

Front Courtyard as Busy as a Marketplace

Linley, Wharton, Blumer, and Olivier almost simultaneously turned to stare at Emperor Johann in surprise.

On March 15th, the Emperor would announce who would marry the Seventh Princess?

In the past, Emperor Johann had kept delaying, without seeming to be the slightest bit impatient. Neither Wharton nor Blumer had imagined that Emperor Johann would suddenly say such a thing.

“Nina...” Wharton turned to look at Nina.

Nina shook her head, also confused. “I don’t know anything. My Imperial father didn’t tell me anything about this.” She, too, looked frantically at Emperor Johann, but as the Seventh Princess was a member of imperial clan, her marriage was not something she could design on her own. It was completely up to Emperor Johann to decide.

“Princess.” At this moment, a palace attendant came over. “His Imperial Majesty is about to leave. It is time to return to the palace.’

Nina nodded.

Emperor Johann had forbidden her to leave the palace. The only reason she was able to meet Wharton this time was because of this duel in the Colosseum. After bidding farewell to Wharton, Nina followed the imperial clan back and left.

Linley and Wharton’s forces also withdrew from the Colosseum.

“Olivier.” As Linley left via one of the passageways, he glanced at Olivier, and saw that Olivier was also glancing at him.

These two ultimate geniuses exchanged stares, then turned their heads and left the Colosseum.

Ever since the eighty thousand onlookers had witnessed the events in the Colosseum on this day, February 4th, the news about the duel that had taken place at the Colosseum took the imperial capital by storm, filling the entire imperial capital with excitement.

Many people from other cities and other provinces, upon leaving, brought back the news of this duel to their own hometowns as well.

Linley had easily defeated Kenyon, and then fought to a stalemate with Olivier. Olivier had then challenged Haydson. These three events quickly became well-known, and the rumors of these events spread out at astonishing speed.

Linley's reputation quickly became well-known in the imperial capital, and beyond as well, spreading in every direction.

The imperial capital. Boulder Street. Outside Count Wharton's manor, one carriage after another came, all filled with people coming to visit Linley.

Within the inner courtyard of the manor.

Linley, Yale, and Reynolds were seated together, chatting and laughing. Although there were many nobles and famous people clustered together at the front courtyard, Linley couldn't be bothered to pay attention to them.

Actually, those nobles expected and understood this in their heart. Would someone of Linley's status personally welcome them?

At Linley's level, ordinary, worldly trappings of power no longer meant anything to him. Even the Emperor would be extremely courteous when dealing with Saint-level experts and wouldn't dare to put on airs.

Without question...

Now that the Baruch clan had produced someone like Linley, even if Linley were to never become a noble within the Empire and even though Wharton was just a Count, the Baruch clan had naturally become an extremely surpassing clan within the imperial capital.

"Third bro, you've been hiding your power and your talents, but now that you've exploded forth onto the scene, you've really shocked quite a few

people.” Yale laughed loudly.

Reynolds nodded repeatedly as well. “Right, right. I imagine the Radiant Church has a terrible headache right now.”

Yale and Reynolds knew about Linley’s affairs with the Radiant Church. Given the Radiant Church’s power, for them to kill Linley at his current level was virtually impossible.

This was especially true given that Linley was currently in the imperial capital of the O’Brien Empire. The Radiant Church wouldn’t dare send any Saint-level experts over, for fear that the War God would misunderstand. This was the War God’s territory, after all.

“Dealing with the Radiant Church?” Linley laughed calmly. “I’ve already killed the principal target of my quest for revenge. As for dealing with the rest of the Radiant Church, I’m not in a particular rush. Right now, I’m no longer afraid of the people of the Radiant Church. But dealing with the Radiant Church... I don’t have enough power yet.”

The Radiant Church had quite a few peak-stage Saint-level experts.

The currently reigning Holy Emperor, Heidens. The spiritual leader of the Ascetics, Lord Fallen Leaf. The Praetor of the Ecclesiastical Tribunal, Osenno. Special Executor, Stehle. And the leader of the Zealots...

Five experts, with Stehle most likely being the weakest of them.

As for the other four, none of them could be underestimated. Even against Stehle, Linley wouldn’t be able to win that easily. The reason why Linley had been able to easily defeat Kenyon was only because Kenyon was nothing more than a mid-stage Saint-level expert.

“When both my human form and my skills as a magus reach the Saint level...” Linley’s eyes flashed with a fierce light.

“When your human form reaches the Saint level?” Yale and Reynolds exchanged glances. They couldn’t help but feel worried for the future Radiant Church.

If Linley were to reach the Saint level in his human form, then as soon as he

transformed, just relying on physical strength, battle-qi, defense, and speed, he would already be at a terrifying level of power. Supreme Warriors were hailed as the most powerful of Saint-levels. They were nothing to laugh at.

Such a powerful foundation combined with Linley's 'Profound Truths of the Wind' and 'Profound Truths of the Earth'...

They believed that once Linley reached the Saint level in his human form, then his two 'Profound Truths' would also advance in level. And then, once he reached the Saint level as a magus...

He would be invincible in close combat, and at long-range, the spells of a Saint-level magus were unbeatable.

If his opponents were to use human wave tactics, a single annihilating magical spell would be able to destroy them.

"Too terrifying." Yale and Reynolds were frightened just thinking about it. The current Linley was already a peak-stage Saint-level expert. If in the future, his power increased tenfold in every aspect... who could possibly stop him?

"Enough about this topic for now." Linley laughed calmly.

Yale laughed and nodded. "Third bro, do you know? My old man keeps on telling me to handle this affair or handle that affair, but after hearing that you had arrived here, he's stopped pressing me. In fact, he supported me spending more time with you. I must say... my Conglomerate really did make a killing off this deal. We got you as one of our Elders so cheaply."

Previously, at the provincial capital of Basil, Yale had given Linley an elder's medal.

"Even if you didn't give me that medal, if the Dawson Conglomerate had any difficulties, given our relationship, Boss Yale, of course I would help out." Linley laughed.

Yale felt a sense of warmth and gratitude in his heart.

"Beautifully said! Come, cheers!" Yale immediately raised his cup in a toast, and Linley and Reynolds joined him, laughing.

People's hearts were hard to discern, especially after growing up. It would be

hard for Yale, Linley, and Reynolds to easily trust people now, but towards those good friends they made in their carefree, worry-free childhood years, they felt nothing but the utmost trust.

It is a rare thing for someone to be able to have a true bosom friend.

Linley and the others all felt very fortunate to have such good bros.

“Third Bro.” Reynolds pursed his lips. “You really showed off your godlike power this time at the Colosseum. Even our Dunstan clan has sent people to come meet you.”

“They sent someone?” Linley was startled. “Who?”

“One of my paternal uncles,” Reynolds said disdainfully. “But he didn’t have a chance to even see you.”

Linley nodded. Linley had refused to meet with any of the people who had come to pay a visit with him. Even the people of the imperial clan had been summarily ignored.

“If your clan truly wants to meet with me, just give me a heads up, and I’ll go meet with them.” He would of course give face to one of his bros.

“No need.” Reynolds shook his head. “I really don’t see eye to eye with the people in my clan. Anyhow, the point is, Third Bro, you’ve really become famous. This makes my life easier as well. Many people in the clan are now much nicer to me as well. They all know that I’m your bro.” Chortling, Reynolds looked at Linley. “Third Bro, in the future, if anything good comes your way, you have to take care of me, your bro, you know!”

“You little punk.” Seeing the impish expression on Reynold’s face, Linley couldn’t help but laugh while berating him. “You’ve been in the army for seven or eight years now, but you still act this way!”

The four close friends of dormitory 1987. Yale was the playboy type, while Reynolds was the type who feared neither heaven nor earth and would dare to do anything.

“Third Bro, Boss Yale, I’m only this one way in front of you guys. In front of those common soldiers, I always have a hard-ass look on my face.” Reynolds

intentionally put on a stern, solemn expression.

It had to be said that once Reynolds hardened his face, he did indeed have the look of a soldier in his eyes and demeanor.

After chatting and joking with his close friends, Linley's face grew solemn. "Boss Yale, Fourth Bro. There's something I need you two to help me plan out."

"What is it?" Reynolds and Yale looked at Linley.

Given Linley's current status, what did he have to worry about?

"This has to do with my little brother. That day, Emperor Johann publicly announced that on March 15th, he would openly announce at the Martial Palace who the Seventh Princess will marry." Linley's face was very solemn.

Reynolds and Yale both nodded.

"My little brother, Wharton, and the Seventh Princess share a deep love for each other. Without the Seventh Princess, I fear that my little brother will be in pain for a long, long time. I don't want to see something like that to happen once again, and to my own little brother." Linley's voice was very low.

Reynolds and Yale exchanged glances.

They still remembered how Linley had actually coughed out blood that year when he and Alice had broken up, and then carved out the sculpture 'Awakening From the Dream' over ten days and ten nights, not drinking or eating anything.

Although Linley didn't say anything, they both understood that this had deeply hurt Linley.

"Third Bro, go ahead. Tell us what you want us to do," Yale said directly, and Reynolds nodded by his side as well.

Linley nodded. "Right now, I have two options planned. If Emperor Johann plans to choose my little brother, then that will be a joyous event. But... if he chooses Blumer..."

Linley's face turned cold.

"At that time, I won't give a damn about the fact that he's the Emperor, or

how powerful Blumer's older brother is. I will help my little brother and go bring the Seventh Princess out of the palace and allow the two of them to elope together. If anyone tries to stop me, I will kill them!" A killing intent could be seen in Linley's eyes.

Reynolds and Yale couldn't help but feel their hearts shiver.

Others might not understand, but they understood clearly. The five Barker brothers that Linley had brought with him were actually Undying Warriors, and three of them had Saint-level power. And then there was the Blackcloud Panther and Bebe.

Six Saint-level experts!

Once Linley decided to go all out, especially with Bebe who was no weaker than Linley, the entire imperial capital would no doubt begin to tremble from the repercussions of six trouble-making Saint-level experts.

"I hope his Imperial Majesty chooses Wharton." Reynolds and Yale were both praying in their hearts.

"Third Bro." Yale looked solemnly at Linley. "Don't be impatient. Even if you have to bring the Seventh Princess out by force, there's no need to push things to such a state."

"I know." Linley laughed calmly. "I'm only saying, IF someone tries to stop me, then I'll kill them. My little brother and I naturally don't have as firm an understanding of the affairs of the imperial capital as your clans, which is why I hope the two of you can help me think about this issue."

The Dunstan clan and the Dawson clan both had very deep roots of power, and knew many things about the events occurring in the imperial capital.

"Third Bro, set your mind at ease. My Dawson Conglomerate's forces are quite numerous. We even have a number of palace attendants and maids who will obey the words of the Conglomerate," Yale said confidently.

Money was a wondrous thing. The power of money could be extremely large.

"When I go back, I will speak with my old man. Don't worry. My old man will definitely help and support you." Yale laughed.

Linley was certain about this as well.

If the Chairman of the Dawson Conglomerate were to leak this information to the Emperor, he probably wouldn't see much of a benefit. After all, the Dawson Conglomerate didn't lack for money. But as for experts... the Emperor couldn't simply order a Saint-level expert to serve the Dawson Conglomerate, right?

"You should take primary responsibility for this affair of Third Bro's. My clan's authority primarily resides in the military, after all." Reynolds knew his own limits.

Linley nodded.

"Then I'll be counting on you, Boss Yale," Linley said seriously.

Yale nodded confidently.

After the deaths of his parents, Linley had only a single relative left: Wharton. No matter what, he wouldn't let his little brother be hurt. If Emperor Johann were to select Wharton, then that would be wonderful. But if he didn't... Linley wasn't averse to revealing the true depths of power available to him and forcibly bring Nina out.

Caylan's Arrival

The night descended. In Channe, the imperial capital of the O'Brien Empire, the most military powerful Empire in the Yulan continent, life went on as usual. Aside from a few crowded nightlife streets, the city was calm and peaceful.

East Channe. Boulder Street. After receiving countless carriages over the past few days, Count Wharton's manor gradually regained its usual calm as well.

Within Count Wharton's halls.

Linley, Housekeeper Hiri, Hillman, Barker and his brothers, Zassler, and the other core members of the team were in a meeting. They were discussing how to handle the Seventh Princess affair.

"If his Imperial Majesty really were to select Blumer, then I will act in accordance with your plans, Big Bro." Wharton didn't hesitate in the slightest.

Hillman nodded solemnly as well. "The soldiers of the Empire are famous for their courage and fearlessness, while the Seventh Princess is located deep within the palace. If you are discovered while sneaking within... even if you manage to slaughter your way out, no doubt there will be countless deaths."

After arriving at the O'Brien Empire, Hillman had been stunned by the spirit and aura of the Empire.

Martial!

The entire Empire venerated the War God, and the only deity they worshipped was the War God. This nation deeply respected powerful experts. One could easily sense that just by looking at the near-crazed reactions of those onlookers in the Colosseum.

Cowards who fled from battle would be viewed with disdain by the Empire.

The O'Brien Empire was located in the northern part of the Yulan continent. The entire Empire was often fairly cold all year around, which had also helped

the citizens of the Empire in developing their endurance.

“Uncle Hillman, if we are to go bring out the Seventh Princess, we definitely won’t just send a single person. Although the soldiers of the Empire are very powerful, as far as I can tell, they shouldn’t be able to pose a threat to us. The only potential complication is that there are Saint-level experts living in the palace.”

The Emperor didn’t have the ability to demand a Saint-level expert be his personal bodyguard, but the War God would of course station Saint-level experts within the palace to help defend it. The value of the items in the imperial treasury and various hidden treasure rooms were more important than the Emperor himself. Naturally, they would have to be protected.

If someone dared to barge into the imperial palace to take a princess, those resident Saint-level experts might just interfere and stop them. Linley was confident in his ability to deal with Saint-level experts by himself, but if he was bringing an ordinary person like Nina with him, it would be tricky.

Linley looked at Bebe, who was resting on his legs. “Bebe. When the time comes, it will be up to you.”

Bebe immediately leapt to his feet, hopping onto the table.

“Hrm? Up to me?” Bebe rolled his beady little black eyes as he looked at Wharton. “Little Wharton, don’t worry. I, Bebe, will definitely bring your woman back to you totally unharmed.”

“Bebe will go?” Wharton was stunned.

“Little Wharton, don’t you trust me, Bebe?” Bebe raised his little head proudly, widening his eyes and staring angrily at Wharton.

Wharton hurriedly shook his head. “It isn’t that I don’t trust you. It’s... the imperial palace will definitely have Saint-level experts residing there. If they fight against each other, will Bebe really be able to bring a weak person like Nina safely?”

“Wharton, given Bebe’s level of power, bringing the Seventh Princess out of the imperial palace shouldn’t be a problem.” Linley had quite a bit of confidence in Bebe’s abilities. “Bebe’s speed is the fastest I’ve ever seen.”

“The fastest? Big Bro, are you saying he’s even faster than you and Olivier?” Wharton said in surprise.

“Bebe’s speed is the fastest speed I have ever seen in a magical beast,” the Blackcloud Panther, Haeru, suddenly spoke up from his position lying on the ground. Blackcloud Panthers were famed for their speed. When they were at the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, Bebe was actually only an early-stage ninth rank. But even then, Bebe was already almost on par with the Blackcloud Panther.

After five or six years had passed, Bebe’s speed had surpassed the Blackcloud Panther’s by a large margin, reaching a new, terrifying level.

And now? After having reached the Saint level, Bebe’s speed had soared once again!

“Of course he is faster than Olivier.” Linley laughed as he rubbed Bebe’s little head. “Wharton, let me tell you, Bebe’s speed and defense are the greatest I have ever seen. In the past, when I was at the Ernst Institute, Bebe was still in his growing phase and had the power of a magical beast of the seventh or eighth rank. But even after being struck by the dying blow of a peak-stage ninth-ranked Armored Razorback Wyrms, he still only suffered a severe wound.”

This was the first time Wharton had heard of this. It was the first time Zassler and the others had heard this story as well.

“How is that possible?”

They were all stunned. An Armored Razorback Wyrms was one of the most terrifying dragon-type magical beasts.

“When I encountered Haeru in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, Haeru wasn’t able to injure Bebe at all with his attacks. At that time, Bebe was only an early-stage ninth rank. You must know that Haeru’s attacks were able to cause harm to me at that time, even though I had the defensive powers of a late-stage ninth-rank expert after transforming.”

Bebe raised his head even higher upon hearing Linley’s praise, staring around himself haughtily like a victorious general.

“I can tell you this. Bebe’s speed is definitely higher than Olivier’s. What’s

more, even if Olivier was able to land a blow of his 'Sword of the Aurora' on Bebe, he still probably wouldn't be able to break past Bebe's defense."

Linley laughed.

Bebe's fur's defensive power was simply too terrifying.

"The 'Sword of the Aurora' most likely wouldn't be able to break his defense?" Wharton, Hillman and the others fell silent. That unremarkable little Shadowmouse Linley had acquired when he was young had grown to be so powerful.

Bebe shook his head. "Har har har. The defense of me, Bebe, is naturally powerful. That goes without saying. However... I'm not confident in my ability to deal with a blow from the Boss's 'Profound Truths of the Earth'."

Linley's 'Profound Truths of the Earth' all but ignored defense. The only thing defense would do would be to slightly weaken the strength of the vibrations as it passed through.

"Given Bebe's speed, bringing out the Seventh Princess then fleeing at high speed from the imperial palace shouldn't be a problem. Most likely, the Saint-level experts in the palace simply wouldn't have time to catch up."

"Heh heh. Boss, just entrust this issue to me." Bebe was extremely excited. He looked as though he wanted to go break the Seventh Princess out right now.

"Don't be impatient. Emperor Johann hasn't made his announcement yet with regards to who he will choose, after all." Right now, Linley was prepared for either eventuality. He wouldn't be caught offguard.



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Both Wharton and Blumer spent these next few days worrying. Many of the nobles of the imperial capital were also secretly guessing which one of them would end up marrying the seventh princess.



In the imperial palace.

The Emperor was currently in a seated meeting with a blue-haired middle-aged man. In front of them was a strategic wargame board. These games were quite popular in the military, and Emperor Johann often liked to play this game as well.

“Your Imperial Majesty. You’ve raised a fine daughter. She’s actually attracted so many suitors, including my own younger son.” The blue-haired middle-aged man laughed.

This blue-haired middle-aged man was the mighty Imperial Left Premier, Judd Darryl. Judd and Johann were on extremely good terms, and in private they were as close to each other as brothers.

“Judd, stop teasing me.” In front of Judd, Johann only addressed himself as ‘me’, not using the royal ‘we’. Just from this alone, one could tell how close the relationship was between these two men. But of course, he only did so when nobody else was present.

“You don’t know this, but this has been a huge headache for me. Blumer and Wharton aren’t too much of an issue. Either would be a fine choice. But their older brothers...” Emperor Johann sighed. “Olivier and Linley both are absolutely terrifying.”

Judd nodded. “Indeed. I saw that astonishing battle in the air above the Colosseum as well. Olivier and Linley both revealed that they had peak-stage Saint-level power from the very beginning. I didn’t expect that the power they initially revealed was just the tip of the iceberg. They actually both had their own ultimate attacks, and Olivier even dared to challenge the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson.”

Johann nodded. “Olivier and the Monolithic Sword Saint competed before. Last time, Olivier lost. But despite having already competed and thus knowing exactly how powerful the Monolithic Sword Saint is, he still dares to challenge him yet again? That means he definitely has something that is making him confident.”

“I have a feeling that both Olivier and Linley will be people on the level of the Monolithic Sword Saint in the future.” Johann sighed. “The most damnable thing is, both of these men are extremely protective of their younger brothers. Judd. You tell me. How can I not have a headache?”

Judd began to laugh.

“Then, your Imperial Majesty, have you made your decision yet?” Judd looked at Johann.

Johann nodded. “I’ve made my decision.”

“Who?” Judd was very curious.

Johann said resignedly, “I admit that Linley is indeed the most brilliant person I have seen in my entire life. He is astonishing in every single aspect. But compared to him, Olivier isn’t much inferior. If it weren’t for other factors, I would probably choose Wharton.”

“Then your Imperial Majesty, you mean to say... you have chosen Blumer?” Judd could tell what Emperor Johann meant.

“Right.” Johann nodded.

“There’s nothing for it. Blumer is, after all, the personal disciple of the War God. You should know how influential the War God is in the Empire. In addition... over four of his fellow apprentices have come to speak with me. All of them did so for Blumer’s sake,” Emperor Johann said helplessly.

“Four of them?”

Judd was shocked as well. “I’ve heard that the personal disciples of the War God rarely get involved in matters. I didn’t expect that as soon as he became a personal disciple, four other personal disciples would come out and speak on his behalf.”

“Judd, you should know that although in principle, I have the most authority in the Empire, in reality... the War God is still the highest power in the land.”

Emperor Johann, in the end, had decided to side with the War God’s College.



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The Imperial Left Premier's manor.

An astonishingly handsome young man with long, flowing blue hair was taking a casual stroll on the stone roads within his own family's estates. Whenever he saw anyone, even servants, he would smile and nod towards them.

Caylan Darryl, a genius magus.

"In the end, his Imperial Majesty decided to choose Blumer?" Caylan shook his head and sighed. His father, Judd, deeply doted on Caylan. He had even told Caylan about this affair.

"Why? Why can't his Imperial Majesty consider his daughter's feelings?" In his heart, Caylan was actually very unhappy with some of the coldly pragmatic ways in which the noble clans and the imperial clan handled affairs.

In his mind, people should treat other people well. If two people were to be together, it should be because both loved each other. Emperor Johann should have considered things from Nina's standpoint.

"That girl Nina."

Thinking back to how he and Nina had played around together when they were young, Caylan came to a decision. He immediately headed out of the Left Premier's manor. The only thing he said to the housekeeper when he ran into him was, "I'm going out for a walk." Caylan headed straight for Count Wharton's manor on Boulder Street.

Caylan had come to a decision.

He had to inform Wharton of this affair.



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At nightfall, Wharton was still training in his manor's training area. Next to him, Linley was meditating quietly. Just at this moment, a servant ran over. "Milord, Lord Caylan of the Left Premier's household has arrived."

"Caylan?"

Wharton came to a halt. In his heart, Wharton actually felt very grateful to this former romantic rival of his. After all, Caylan had voluntarily given up his pursuit. If he hadn't, this affair would be even more complicated.

"Caylan's come? Wharton, I'll accompany you." Linley was actually quite curious about this young man who had voluntarily abandoned his pursuit as well.

Linley and Wharton headed directly to the guest hall. When they saw Caylan, the first impression Linley had was that this was a person who was very amiable and easy to get along with.

"Wharton." Seeing Wharton, Caylan smiled, then looked at Linley. "And this should be your older brother, Master Linley. I've heard of Master Linley's reputation a long time ago."

Linley smiled at him as well.

"Caylan, please sit." Wharton was very friendly towards him.

Caylan shook his head. "No need. I've come today to tell you something. As soon as I have, I'll be leaving." Caylan's face grew solemn.

"Tell me what?" Wharton said, puzzled.

Caylan said resignedly, "Wharton, based on the information I've received, on March 15th, his Imperial Majesty is most likely going to choose Blumer, not you. But of course... since it isn't March 15th yet, nothing is for sure. However, this information I have is most likely 90% accurate."

An Exchange Between Geniuses

Wharton was stunned by this sudden news.

Wharton truly wanted to be able to openly wed Nina in the imperial capital, rather than elope with her.

“Caylan, is this information of yours true?” Linley stared at Caylan, asking urgently.

Caylan nodded solemnly. “Master Linley, although his Imperial Majesty hasn’t publicly proclaimed it yet, this information came from my father’s conversation with his Imperial Majesty. Master Linley, I trust you can judge for yourself the authenticity of this news.”

Linley nodded slightly.

There was no need for the Imperial Left Premier to lie to his own son. And, given Linley’s spiritual energy as an Arch Magus of the ninth rank, if Caylan were currently lying, Linley should be able to sense something.

“No matter what happens, we brothers would like to thank you for your assistance, Caylan,” Linley said in thanks.

Only now did Wharton’s mind become clear again. He too said gratefully towards Caylan, “Caylan, thank you for notifying us.”

“No need to thank me. I just hope that in the future, Nina will have a happy life. Alright, I need to leave.” Caylan bowed slightly towards Linley and Wharton, then left.

Wharton watched Caylan leave, then suddenly turned towards Linley. “Big Bro. What should we do?” Wharton’s mind was in chaos.

“What should we do?” Linley spoke with absolute conviction. “For now, we immediately begin moving the household out of the imperial capital.”

Linley stared coldly in the direction of the imperial palace. “We are out of options. I will immediately instruct people to speak with Yale and have him come. Right now, we’ll have to use the secret channels of the Dawson Conglomerate to take Rebecca, Leena, Jenne, and Uncle Hillman’s family members out of the imperial capital. And, ideally the Emperor must not discover that they’ve left.”

In truth, it wouldn’t be too big of a deal even if the Emperor did find out.

Even if Emperor Johann was suspicious of Linley, so what? Would he dare to offend Linley? He himself was not the War God, after all. And even if he dared to offend Linley... who under his command was actually capable of dealing with Linley?



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That very day, Linley invited Yale over. After discussing the issue for quite some time with Yale, Yale immediately slapped his chest and promised, “Third Bro, don’t worry about it. It’s just a few people. There definitely won’t be any issues.”

Yale then laughed. “Actually, Third Bro. Even if the Emperor found out, he would pretend he didn’t know.”

Linley smiled as well.

He had reached the Saint level. Although the status of the Emperor was very high, Linley didn’t have any fear of the man. In truth, the only person Linley was afraid of was that man who was residing on War God Mountain.

“Still, try to avoid being discovered,” Linley instructed.



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Although, Jenne, Rebecca, and Leena were reluctant to leave, they knew that they would meet again with Linley’s group later, and thus they followed the directives of the Dawson Conglomerate and quietly left the imperial capital.

Actually, Linley and Wharton hadn't given up all hope yet.

They hoped that on March 15th, Emperor Johann would choose Wharton at the Martial Palace. Although the chance was very low... it was still possible that Emperor Johann might change his mind.

After all, Nina eloping with Wharton meant parting with her family. As for Wharton, he, Housekeeper Hiri, and Hillman had all become very comfortable and used to living in the imperial capital. Unless it was absolutely necessary, they didn't want to take the final step.



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Each day passed, and March 15th drew nearer as well. The streets, hotels, and restaurants of the imperial capital were once again filled with discussion regarding Wharton, Blumer, and their older brothers.

Everyone was trying to guess who would be the one to wed the Seventh Imperial Princess.

The much-anticipated day of March 15th finally arrived. That morning, a rare snowstorm actually descended on the imperial capital early in the morning. Even though the sun came up at seven or eight, it was still hard to see anything farther than ten meters away.

"Whew." Standing outside his manor, Wharton let out a long breath.

These past few days, he had been under a lot of mental pressure.

"Enough. We'll know the answer today. Relax." Linley laughed, clapping Wharton on the shoulder. Wharton turned his head to look at his older brother. Looking at Linley, Wharton felt as though Linley were his strongest source of support. With Linley there, Wharton felt a sense of confidence.

"Right." Wharton nodded strongly.

Linley and Wharton immediately got on their carriages, heading in the direction of the imperial palace. Because of the snowstorm, the carriages advanced very slowly. In addition, there were many carriages heading towards

the imperial palace this day.

At the gates of the imperial palace.

One carriage after another stopped at the gates, and the various nobles exited their carriages and exchanged pleasantries with each other.

“Lord Olivier has arrived.” Seeing Olivier and Blumer walk out of the carriage together, many of the nobles and ministers outside the gates welcomed them warmly.

Seeing the nobles and ministers walk towards him as soon as he left the carriage, Olivier couldn’t help but frown.

“Second brother, let’s go inside.” Olivier didn’t so much as glance at the nobles as he emitted a wave of force from his body, directly pushing aside the oncoming nobles and senior ministers, yet not harming them in the slightest.

The nobles and ministers all exchanged glances. They couldn’t help but be surprised.

“Your Lordship, we’ve arrived,” a carriage-driver’s voice rang out, and then Wharton and Linley exited the carriage. This time, the nobles and ministers very wisely did not try to draw too near. They just called out words of welcome at a safe distance.

Linley and Wharton didn’t pay too much attention to those nobles either, heading directly for the palace.

“Linley.” Olivier came to a halt, turning his head and bidding Linley welcome.

“Olivier.” Linley still felt a degree of respect towards a powerful rival such as Olivier. Nobody could reach such a level of power without focusing for many years on painstakingly training one’s self.

Linley, Wharton, Olivier, and Blumer walked forward in a line, heading towards the Martial Palace together.

“Linley, that day, at the Colosseum... to be honest, I really wanted to keep fighting with you.” A friendly smile appeared on Olivier’s face.

“Oh? Then why did you give up the chance? I refuse to believe you were afraid of Haydson,” Linley said with a calm laugh.

Olivier and Linley had both sensed each other's power. Although that day, they had been forced aside by Haydson, aside from Haydson's power, one of the main reasons they had been forced aside was because they had not yet allowed their attacks to explode at full power.

"It wasn't that I was afraid of Haydson. It was more that... challenging Haydson was the goal I set for myself six years ago. After mastering the obsidian sword, I absolutely must challenge him." Olivier glanced at him. "At the Colosseum, I very much hoped to continue to do battle with you. But this battle must come after my battle with Haydson."

"I don't want to let Haydson know the secrets to my obsidian sword technique. If I were to battle you with it, wouldn't I be exposing myself to him?" A hint of a smile was on Olivier's face. "I really want to see if the 'Monolithic Sword Saint' Haydson, famed for his defensive abilities, can withstand my attack."

Linley nodded.

"In the duel between myself and the Monolithic Sword Saint roughly a month from now, who do you think will win?" Olivier suddenly asked.

Linley paused for a moment.

That day, Linley had seen the layer of flowing black energy on the obsidian sword's blade. It gave off a very strange sensation. Linley was very confident in his own adamantine heavy sword, but he wasn't necessarily confident in his ability to withstand his opponent's blow.

"It's possible for either you or the Monolithic Sword Saint to win. But I think the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, has a higher chance of winning. After all, in all these years, no Saint-level expert has been able to beat him. For him to be able to accomplish such a feat means that he surely has some power to rely on," Linley said impartially.

Olivier nodded. "Right. I admit, six years ago, when I dueled with Haydson, he only revealed a portion of his true power. Haydson... his power is unfathomably deep. But I am filled with confidence towards my obsidian sword as well. No matter how strong his defense is, he shouldn't be able to withstand it."

Linley laughed.

How could it be that this Olivier was so similar to him? He himself had that same sort of confidence in his adamantine heavy sword.

“What sort of attack does your obsidian sword possess? Why are you so confident in it?” Linley asked curiously.

Olivier laughed. “My obsidian sword?” Olivier looked at Linley. Pausing for a moment, he said, “I can tell you this. You should know by now that the technique of my obsidian sword is based on my insights into the Elemental Laws of Darkness.”

Linley nodded.

“Thus, in addition to astonishing penetrative power and attack power, my obsidian sword also possesses a spiritual attack,” Olivier said directly with confidence.

“Spiritual attack?” Linley was shocked.

Darkness magic did indeed include spirit-based curses. The Elemental Laws of Darkness included all sorts of soul-related properties. But for Olivier to be able to develop a spiritual attack with his obsidian sword based on his insights into these laws was indeed astonishing.

“Perhaps the ordinary, physical attacks of the obsidian sword are very easy to defend against, but the assault on the spirit... ordinary defenses are virtually useless against it. I want to see how Haydson can block it!”

As Olivier spoke, a look of excitement appeared on Blumer’s face as well.

Linley had to admit...

The obsidian sword was indeed very terrifying.

“How frightening. To directly attack the spirit...” Linley was amazed at the power of this technique as well.

“The more powerful one’s spirit is, the greater the chance that they will be able to block this attack. But warriors generally do not have very powerful spiritual energy. Even Saint-level warriors usually don’t have as much spiritual energy as an Arch Magus of the ninth rank.” Olivier was very confident.

Warriors had far less spiritual energy than magi of the same rank.

This technique was aimed precisely at the weak point of warriors.

“Linley. What about the attack for your technique?” Olivier asked as well.

Blumer also looked at Linley. Right now, a hint of arrogance was in Blumer’s eyes. He was certain that Linley wouldn’t be able to match up to his Big Brother.

Linley didn’t try to hide anything. He said directly, “My technique with the adamantine heavy sword also renders exterior defenses useless. It directly strikes against the internal organs in the opponent’s body.”

“Renders defenses useless?” Olivier’s face changed.

Generally speaking, experts would slowly build up their spiritual energy. On the path to gaining insight into the Laws, their rate of growth in spiritual energy would increase rapidly. For example, Haydson’s spiritual energy should be able to match an Arch Magus of the ninth rank.

But the internal organs were different.

Although it was easy to train one’s muscles, it was extremely hard to train the heart or the intestines. They could only absorb a little bit of elemental essence, which would slightly fortify the heart and the organs.

If one’s organs were destroyed, one would definitely die.

“Renders exterior defenses useless and strikes directly at the insides of the body...” Olivier felt admiration in his heart towards Linley as well. This sort of attack was simply too bizarre, yet Linley had managed to develop it.

Linley similarly felt admiration towards Olivier. The obsidian sword was able to attack someone’s spirit!



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The nobles and ministers behind them, upon seeing Linley and Olivier chatting on seemingly amicable terms, couldn’t help but feel surprised.

Soon, Linley and the others arrived outside the Martial Palace.

Linley and Olivier glanced at each other, then led their younger brothers into the Martial Palace together. Actually, even though they had described their ultimate attacks to each other, the attacks would still be very hard to defend against.

Both the spirit and the internal organs were definitely vital points. This was why these two geniuses were so confident, and why they weren't afraid of telling their rival their secret.

So what if I tell you? Let's see if you can do anything about it!



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Quite a few people were gathered in the Martial Palace. Upon Linley and Wharton entering the palace, a palace attendant immediately walked over. "Lord Linley, his Imperial Majesty has already arranged a seat for you. Please take a seat over there."

Ordinary ministers had to remain standing, but Linley did not.

Linley calmly sat down, while Olivier was also led to a seat by a palace attendant. The eyes of the various nobles and ministers in the palace were all focused on Linley and Olivier with a hint of respect and dread.

"Linley, who do you think his Imperial Majesty will select?" Olivier chatted casually with Linley, as though those watching nobles and ministers weren't present at all.

"My younger brother Wharton, of course," Linley said directly.

Olivier glanced at Linley. "I don't think I agree. Oh, his Imperial Majesty has arrived." Linley and Olivier both looked towards the palace gates. At that moment, a number of palace attendants, the Empress, the Imperial Consorts, and seven princesses entered the palace alongside his Imperial Majesty, Emperor Johann.

The Results

The entire Martial Palace fell silent. Seeing Emperor Johann arrive, Linley and Olivier both rose to their feet. In the Martial Palace, the Emperor had the highest rank. They had to at least give the Emperor some face.

Wharton's gaze fell upon Nina. Nina was behind her mother, the Empress. As soon as she entered, she looked at him.

"Big lunk..." Nina's mouth moved, but she didn't speak.

Wharton squeezed out a smile of his own, but his eyes were firm. The two knew what the other was thinking from the gaze they shared. No matter who Emperor Johann selected today, Wharton wouldn't give up.

"Nina is mine. Nobody can take her from me." Wharton glanced at Blumer from afar, then turned to look at his Imperial Majesty, Emperor Johann.

"Your Imperial Majesty!"

All the nobles and ministers in the palace fell to one knee, bowing respectfully.

"Arise, all of you." Emperor Johann turned to look at Olivier and Linley, saying modestly, "Linley, Olivier, please, take your seats."

Wharton also stared at Linley from afar. With Linley there, Wharton felt the utmost confidence.

Emperor Johann then turned to look at the Empress and his Imperial Consorts. "All of you, you can sit over there. Nina, sit with your Imperial mother." The Empress, the Imperial Consorts, and the seven princesses all sat on the other side of the palace, where a row of seats had been arranged.

In the O'Brien Empire, the Empress and the consorts were not permitted to get involved in politics. In the Martial Palace, even the Empress could only sit below and watch.

“Today is a very important day. Haha... We expect many of you have been waiting for this day. Indeed, today, We are going to announce who will be the one to marry Our beloved daughter,” Emperor Johann smiled towards Nina as he spoke.

Linley, Olivier, and everyone else stared raptly at Emperor Johann.

Wharton felt his heart begin to thump loudly.

Who would it be?

Himself? Or Blumer?

“As for who We will select, before We make the announcement, We would like to introduce two of the personal disciples of the War God.” Emperor Johann saw the two figures flying in this direction from far away. Both men were dressed in long blue robes. Upon entering the Martial Palace, the first one nodded towards Blumer.

“Your Imperial Majesty.” Only then did the two men greet Emperor Johann.

The expression on Wharton’s face changed.

The personal disciples of the War God? Seeing these two arrive, Wharton sensed that things were not going to go well. Blumer, not too far away from him, cast Wharton a delighted glance.

These two had clearly come in support of Blumer.

“We shall make some introductions, first. This person on the left is Mr. Lanke, a personal disciple of the War God and a Saint-level expert,” Emperor Johann said in a loud voice. “This person on the right is Mr. Castro, a personal disciple of the War God and a Saint-level expert as well.”

The nobles and ministers in the Martial Palace all made gestures of respect towards the two Saint-level experts.

“Lanke, Castro, please take a seat over there, near Linley and Olivier,” Emperor Johann said with a smile.

Lanke, Castro, Linley, and Olivier were all seated together.

Wharton cleared his throat. Right now, he truly felt under a great deal of

pressure. The atmosphere was clearly in favor of Blumer. At this moment in time, Emperor Johann spoke.

“Blumer, Wharton, come to the middle,” Emperor Johann said in a clear voice.

“Yes, your Imperial Majesty.”

Taking a deep breath, Wharton forced himself to stop thinking wild thoughts, then headed to the center of the palace. Blumer and Wharton stared at each other coldly, then stood shoulder to shoulder.

Everyone’s attention was focused on these two.

“We are going to announce who shall become Nina’s husband. Naturally, that’s only if you two both desire to marry Nina. We shall ask you one more time; do the two of you both wish to marry Nina?” Emperor Johann said in a solemn voice.

This was the final moment.

Blumer immediately said. “Your Imperial Majesty, my greatest desire and dream is to be able to take Princess Nina as my wife.”

Wharton said respectfully, “Your Imperial Majesty, it is also your servant’s dream that I can have an open, public marriage ceremony with Nina, and that the two of us shall be together forever, never to be apart.”

As Wharton spoke, he looked at Nina.

Nina was looking at Wharton as well. Their gazes met. Most of the people in the palace noticed this, and Blumer’s face sank.

“Haha, wonderful.” Emperor Johann laughed loudly. “Since both of you are so sincere, We are very gratified. But in the end, We must choose one person.”

As he spoke, Emperor Johann cast a smiling glance at Blumer.

This glance immediately dissipated the rage in Blumer’s heart. He could sense what Emperor Johann’s hidden meaning was, and Blumer suddenly felt confidence.

Who would be chosen?

To the contrary, Wharton was growing anxious as he looked anxiously at

Emperor Johann.

“Everyone, please be quiet. We solemnly announce that—”

“Wait,” that personal disciple of the War God, Castro, stood up and spoke out, preventing Emperor Johann from speaking. Emperor Johann looked questioningly towards him.

If it had been someone else who had interrupted him, he would’ve shouted in anger already. But the person stopping him was Castro.

“Your Imperial Majesty.” Castro actually headed towards Emperor Johann, in the middle of the palace. All of the nobles and ministers were stupefied. “There is something I must tell you in private, your Imperial Majesty.” As he spoke, Castro glanced at Blumer.

The palace attendants didn’t know whether they should try to block him or not try to block him.

“Step aside. Castro has something he wishes to discuss with Us.” Emperor Johann instructed his attendants to step aside, and Castro walked directly to Emperor Johann’s side.

Emperor Johann looked at Castro quizzically.

Castro whispered a few words quietly into Emperor Johann’s ear. Emperor Johann frowned, glancing at Castro. But then Emperor Johann started, and a smile appeared on his face.

Castro stepped away.

“What is this Castro doing?” Linley had a very bad feeling about this. “Could it be that Castro is privately asking Emperor Johann to select Blumer?”

In Linley’s heart, he truly hoped that his younger brother would have a perfect marriage.

But there was nothing that could be done about it. Behind Blumer was the might of the War God’s College.

“Haha. Just then, Castro had a minor matter to discuss with Us. Now, We shall officially announce that Our daughter shall be wed to...” A smile was on Emperor Johann’s face.

The entire palace was so silent, you could hear a needle falling.

Wharton and Blumer both looked anxiously at Emperor Johann.

“Shall be wed to...” Emperor Johann proclaimed loudly. “Wharton Baruch!”

“Wharton Baruch!” “Wharton Baruch!” “Wharton Baruch!” Wharton’s name echoed throughout the Martial Palace.

The entire Martial Palace became utterly still.

Blumer’s eyes bulged out.

Wharton was stunned.

Nina was stupefied as well.

“Ah!!!!” Wharton suddenly let out a wild howl of excitement, then charged directly towards Nina. Nina recovered as well, throwing herself directly into Wharton’s embrace.

Wharton and Nina actually tightly embraced each other, there in the Martial Palace, as though no one was watching. Nina was utterly thrilled.

“Impossible!” Blumer shook his head nonstop, simply unable to accept this result.

In truth, Blumer didn’t feel too much affection towards Princess Nina. But Blumer had a strong, possessive nature, wanting to possess the best of everything. And when he was young, people would often compare him against Wharton.

Thus, Blumer wanted to surpass Wharton in every way.

Challenging him to a duel. Wooing Nina. They were all for this reason. The only person Blumer truly loved was himself.

“Wharton. Nina,” Emperor Johann’s voice rang out.

Only now did Wharton and Nina come to their senses. This was the Martial Palace. Nina’s face turned red, and she immediately retreated into her Imperial mother’s embrace.

Wharton immediately bowed as well. “Your Imperial Majesty, your servant was too excited.”

“We can understand. We can understand.” Emperor Johann laughed and nodded.

And then, Emperor Johann looked at Blumer. “Blumer, you and Wharton are both outstanding talents. Only, We have to consider what is best for our daughter. Do you understand?”

What could Blumer do?

He wasn't Wharton. In Blumer's heart, even if Princess Nina became his wife, she would still be nothing more than something for him to show off. He didn't have much affection for Nina herself. Although it was hard for Blumer to accept this defeat, he didn't lose his composure.

“I understand the difficult choice your Imperial Majesty had to make.” Blumer could only grind his teeth and force out these words, swallowing the bile that had risen to his throat.

Emperor Johann nodded with satisfaction.

“Haha...” Emperor Johann laughed loudly. “We are extremely happy today. How about this. Let Us decide the date for Wharton and Nina's engagement. Next month, on the 12th. Wharton, that will be the date of your engagement ceremony with Nina. Do you have any objections?”

“Thank you, your Imperial Majesty. Your servant has no objections.” Right now, Wharton was all smiles. How could he have any objections?

Linley, standing next to Wharton, felt very happy as well upon seeing his little brother's joy. His little brother's romantic relationship was about to come to a happy conclusion. At last, he was confident it wouldn't turn out like his own had.

Thinking once more about how his own experiences had turned out, Linley felt a bit of pain in his heart.

“Linley, congratulations,” the personal disciple of the War God who sat next to him, Lanke, said in a warm manner.

Castro laughed as well. “Master Linley, on War God Mountain, I am a big collector of stone sculptures. I've always been full of admiration for you, Master

Linley. If you have some free time, Master Linley, please come to War God Mountain for a stroll. War God Mountain welcomes you at any time.”

“I will definitely go when I am free.” Linley was in a fine mood today as well.

Olivier directly rose to his feet and walked to his little brother, Blumer, patting Blumer on the shoulder.

“Linley, Wharton, today you shall enjoy a meal with Us, what do you say?” Emperor Johann’s voice rang out. “Olivier, Blumer, Castro, Lanke, you should come with Us as well.”

Castro and Lanke rose to their feet.

“Your Imperial Majesty, we have affairs we need to attend to back at War God Mountain. We won’t be able to accompany you,” Castro said.

“That’s fine.” Emperor Johann didn’t try to force the issue.

“Your Imperial Majesty, I also need to go prepare for my duel with Haydson next month. My second brother shall accompany me back as well.” Olivier also refused.

Blumer had already lost. How could he stay and have a meal with them?

Emperor Johann understood this and nodded.

But Linley and Wharton accepted Emperor Johann’s invitation. In the future, Emperor Johann would be Wharton’s father-in-law. They had to give him this bit of face.

“I didn’t expect this.” Linley’s face was covered with smiles.

Indeed, he truly had not. Linley had already sent out Jenne, Leena, and Rebecca from the imperial capital, and was already prepared to take Nina by force and let Nina and Wharton elope. But the end result had actually been this. This truly was surprising.

After the court was adjourned, Nina left alongside the Empress and the Imperial Consorts.

But Linley and Wharton followed Emperor Johann to a different place.

“Big Bro.” Wharton’s face was still covered in smiles. He was simply too

happy. Without meaning to, he continued to beam happily.

Linley was very happy for Wharton as well.

“Linley, in the future, we’ll all be one family.” Emperor Johann laughed towards Linley.

“Right. All one family.” Linley smiled back.



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Lanke and Castro were flying in the air side by side, heading straight for the War God Mountain outside the imperial capital.

“What was that all about? What did you say to Johann?” Lanke was confused this entire time. Why did Emperor Johann choose Wharton? Emperor Johann had previously already agreed to choose Blumer.

“I told Johann that our master, the War God, was ordering him to choose Wharton!” Castro said in an unhappy voice.

“Master?” Lanke was stunned.

“How should I know? Right after I entered the palace, Master’s voice rang out in my mind and instructed me to speak with Johann. And then, Master delivered the same message to Johann as well,” Castro said helplessly. “Master most likely was afraid that if he simply spoke to Johann, Johann wouldn’t believe that it truly was the War God who was speaking to him. After all, Master has never spoken to Johann mentally before.”

“Why did Master do such a thing?” Lanke said quizzically.

“How should I know?” Castro had no idea either.

Congratulatory Gift

The imperial palace was under heavy guard, and valiant knights could be seen everywhere, along with beautiful palace serving ladies. Emperor Johann and Linley walked side by side, with Wharton slightly behind them. Behind these three men were a number of palace attendants and serving ladies. All of the soldiers they encountered on the trip over bowed respectfully upon seeing Emperor Johann.

“That is Master Linley.” Many warriors, seeing Linley walking by Emperor Johann’s side, began to murmur quietly amongst themselves.

Their eyes were filled with veneration and adoration towards Linley. They were all young, and many of them were no older than Linley. Many of the young men in the Empire had set Linley as their goal towards which they would strive.

“The O’Brien Empire lives up to its name of being the most military powerful of the six major powers. All of these warriors in the imperial palace are very powerful.” On the way over, Linley noticed that not a single one of the warriors here was weaker than the sixth rank.

Most were of the sixth, and many were of the seventh. Even a few eighth rank warriors could be seen.

Even the ordinary patrolling guards were so powerful. One could imagine how powerful the Empire as a whole was.

“Linley, look. The eyes of those guards are lighting up when they see you. I’m afraid that in their hearts, the veneration they feel towards you is greater than for Us,” Emperor Johann said with a loud laugh.

Linley laughed calmly.

Ever since that duel in the Colosseum, Linley’s fame had spread throughout

the O'Brien Empire, especially given his young age. He had already become a legend.

Linley was in his twenties, and not only a genius sculptor, but also a genius magus and a Saint-level warrior. In the hearts of many, even though they might not be as talented as Linley, as long as they worked hard, they might be able to reach at least 10% of Linley's accomplishments, and they would be happy with that.

This had actually caused many young people in the Empire to train even more painstakingly.

The O'Brien Empire had a long-standing custom that whenever a genius appeared, the Empire would officially spread the news alongside the rumors of the common-folk. The impact on the citizens of the Empire was actually quite large.



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The imperial flower garden. There was a banquet table filled with food, and the only people seated there were Emperor Johann, Linley, and Wharton.

The palace serving maids brought plate after plate of delicacies forward, while the guards around them kept a solemn watch around them.

"You can all leave now." Emperor Johann waved his hand.

"Yes, your Imperial Majesty."

The surrounding maids, servants, and guards all dispersed. Soon afterwards, only Emperor Johann, Linley, and Wharton were present.

Emperor Johann glanced at Wharton. Actually, on the entire trip over from the Martial Palace, his heart was filled with questions.

Why did the War God wish to help Wharton?

In the Empire, the War God was unquestionably the highest power. Wharton was nothing compared to him. The War God and Wharton most likely didn't have much of a relationship.

“Could it be that our venerable ancestor, the War God, has some sort of connection to the ancestors of the Dragonblood Warrior clan? That shouldn’t be the case either. Five thousand years ago, when the Empire was founded, the Dragonblood Warrior, Baruch, was very famous, true, but they were nothing more than peak-stage Saint-level combatants. There was still a major gap between them and the War God. What sort of relationship could the two possibly have had?”

Emperor Johann didn’t believe it.

The War God was someone on the level of the High Priest. How much of a relationship could he possibly have had with Baruch? Even if he had one, could it have been a deep enough relationship that he would help out the descendants of Baruch, five thousand years later?

“Wharton.” Emperor Johann didn’t think about it any longer. Smiling, he said, “A while later, you and Nina will get engaged. You need to take good care of Nina. This child has the temper of a spoiled princess. We hope you can be accommodating towards her.”

Wharton straightened his chest, hurriedly saying, “Your Imperial Majesty, don’t worry.”

But Linley was staring at Emperor Johann.

“A few days ago, Caylan said that Emperor Johann was going to choose Blumer, but now...” Linley was puzzled about this.

Linley asked directly, “Your Imperial Majesty, I wish to ask, why is it that you chose my younger brother Wharton?”

Emperor Johann was a bit startled.

“Haha...” Emperor Johann laughed loudly. “Linley, didn’t We already discuss this at the palace? We were considering things from Nina’s standpoint. Nina likes Wharton, after all. We are deeply gratified that We are able to bring Nina happiness.”

Linley snickered secretly.

If Emperor Johann really were considering things from Nina’s standpoint, then

when Wharton had asked for her hand in marriage, he wouldn't have delayed and caused a large chain of events to occur before accepting.

Emperor Johann saw the look on Linley's face. "What? You don't believe it, Linley?"

"I don't fully believe it, actually," Linley said bluntly.

Emperor Johann started. Generally speaking, who would dare speak to him in such a way? But the one who said these words was Linley, a peak-stage Saint-level expert. Emperor Johann let out two awkward chuckles. "Actually, We admit that We had originally been considering Blumer."

That was more like it.

Although that had been Linley's first time meeting with Caylan, he had the feeling that Caylan was a trustworthy person.

"Linley, you should know that in reality, it is Saint-level experts that determine the rise and fall of an Empire." Emperor Johann sighed. "Saint-level experts can easily kill the enemy's leaders despite being surrounded by a million soldiers. Saint-level magi can utilize destructive forbidden-spells and destroy a million-man army entirely. It can be said that in the eyes of ordinary people, Saint-levels are absolutely invincible experts."

Linley nodded. When he was young, Saint-levels were indeed the ultimate combatants in existence.

"Although We are the Emperor, We do not dare issue orders to Saint-levels. If We were to offend them, they might leave the Empire. We trust there are many places that would welcome a Saint-level expert's arrival." Emperor Johann laughed bitterly.

Linley understood this.

If a Saint-level expert were to flee, given their flying ability, that would be very simple.

"Both Blumer and Wharton are likely to reach the Saint level in the future. But the critical issue is... Blumer belongs to the War God's College. All of the experts of the Empire are clustered around the War God's College. We do not wish to

anger the War God's College. After all, there is an entire group of Saint-level experts there, not just one or two!"

An entire group of Saint-level experts. Just hearing the words was enough to make people shiver.

"With multiple fellow apprentices of Blumer coming to speak on his behalf, We didn't have a choice." Emperor Johann shook his head and sighed.

"Then why did you choose my younger brother Wharton in the end?" Linley asked.

He had been wondering about this the entire time. What was the reason?

Emperor Johann turned a puzzled gaze towards Linley and Wharton. "Linley. Does your Baruch clan have some sort of historical relationship with the War God?"

"The War God?"

Linley immediately understood. Shocked, he said, "Your Imperial Majesty, are you saying that it was the War God who caused you to select Wharton?"

"Of course," Emperor Johann said. "Linley, think about it. In the Empire, whose word carries even more weight than the members of the War God's College? Only the War God, the highest power of the land."

"Our venerable ancestor, the War God, directly spoke to Us mentally and ordered Us to choose Wharton." A hint of excitement was in Emperor Johann's eyes. "This was the first time We have ever heard the voice of our venerable ancestor, the War God."

The War God!

It had actually been the War God!

The War God was an incredible figure. Five thousand years ago, he had battled the High Priest over the Yulan river to a standstill, proving that he was definitely a Deity-level combatant.

After five thousand years, although no one had ever seen the War God fight again, everyone understood that given the War God's natural talent, he was undoubtedly even more terrifyingly powerful now.

The War God had trained incredibly fast, going from ordinary person to Deity-level in just a few centuries.

His sudden rise to prominence five thousand years ago had caused his fame and glory to completely eclipse even the Four Supreme Warriors, becoming the most brilliant shining star of that era.

“The War God helped my little brother?” Linley couldn’t understand it.

“Could it be that he knows my side has six Saint-level experts?” Linley began to wonder. Given the War God’s power, he definitely could sense the strength of Linley’s forces.

Linley shook his head.

Impossible. To a Deity, Saint-level experts were nothing. Most likely, the War God could kill all six of them with one blow.

“Then what’s the reason? Could it really be because he had some relationship with the ancestors of the Baruch clan?” Linley truly didn’t understand what the reason was behind the War God’s actions.



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West of the imperial capital. War God Mountain. Aside from the primary peak, there were four other peaks. Connecting two of the peaks was a natural cave tunnel.

Lanke and Castro were walking side by side in the tunnel.

After travelling several hundred meters through the winding tunnel, the tunnel suddenly turned downwards sharply. If one stared downwards into that bizarre, deep dark hole, not a single thing could be seen. Nobody could tell how deep that tunnel was.

“Whoosh.”

Lanke and Castro jumped directly into the deep hole. They fell down at a fairly slow speed. After falling for several thousand meters, the two landed as gently as leaves on the ground. From the entrance of the tunnel to this hole was

merely a thousand meters, but this hole took them several thousand meters underground.

“Master usually spends his time in closed-door training, and whenever he does so, he’ll usually spend several years, several decades, or even longer training. When he is engaged in training, he’ll virtually never speak to us mentally. But this time, at the Martial Palace, he actually reached out to us mentally and told us to tell Johann to choose Wharton, then told us to come back here.” Lanke was mystified.

This was very contrary to the War God’s habits.

There were very few matters in the world that an ascetic such as War God would issue orders about.

“Junior apprentice-brother, don’t think about it too much. Master surely has his reasons for acting like this. All we need to do is listen and obey,” Castro said.

“Yes, senior apprentice-brother.” Lanke nodded.

To the disciples of the War God’s College, the commands of the War God were not to be flouted. They would do whatever the War God ordered them to do. There was no need to think about it.

“Rumble...” A blistering heat could be sensed in the depths of the tunnel. As they walked in, the stones were slowly turning red as well.

The temperature here was very high!

After going several hundred more meters, Lanke and Castro came to a halt in front of a pitch-black stone door. The stone walls surrounding this door were already scarlet red, and the temperature was so high that even Lanke and Castro had to use their battle-qi on their feet to protect themselves.

If a piece of paper was tossed out, it would most likely instantly be set alight.

“You’ve come,” a calm voice drifted out from behind the door.

The War God’s voice was very soft, but it carried a penetrative power. The voice was like a needle, piercing directly into one’s soul. Castro and Lanke, his two disciples, even suspected... that the War God could possibly dissipate their soul with his voice alone.

This was one of the reasons why Castro and the other personal disciples of the War God feared their Master so much. The War God was simply too powerful.

“Yes, Master,” Castro and Lanke said respectfully. Castro continued, “Master, what instructions have you for us?”

The War God’s voice rang out yet again. “April 12th will be the day of the engagement ceremony for that kid Wharton. Go speak to your eldest apprentice-brother and acquire an interspatial ring. On the day of that kid Wharton’s engagement ceremony, give it to him as his engagement present.”

Castro and Lanke were utterly stunned.

The War God was giving an engagement present?

This had never happened before. Even when they, his personal disciples, had gotten married, the War God paid no heed. After all, was the War God someone who had to send congratulatory gifts to others? Even if he wanted to do so, who would be worthy of accepting his gifts?

But the War God was now ordering them to deliver a congratulatory gift for Wharton’s engagement ceremony?

“You can leave now.” The War God’s calm voice once more sounded out in the tunnel.

Castro and Lanke stared at the pitch-black stone door, then glanced at each other. Although they didn’t understand it at all, they didn’t dare disobey the orders of the War God.

“Yes, Master,” Lanke and Castro replied, their voices filled with incomparable respect.

Stepping Onto the Stage

Yulan calendar, year 10009 - April 12th. This was the day on which Wharton and Nina would be engaged at the imperial capital. One of the two lovers was the younger brother of a peak-stage Saint-level expert, while the other was the daughter of the Emperor. An engagement ceremony such as this would definitely be very well attended.

The nobles of the imperial capital who received invitation letters all felt extremely proud. Many common nobles weren't qualified to be invited to this event; after all, if everyone was invited, the Count's manor wouldn't be able to hold all those people.

The Count's manor was very festive today, and the outside of the manor was flooded with arriving carriages, which blocked off a large half of the Boulder Street. The guards and servants of the nobles weren't qualified to enter the manor, and all had to wait outside. In total, there were thousands of guards and servants waiting outside.

An ocean of people!

Each carriage was gaudier and more lavish than the next, and each young noble lady was dressed more beautifully and was more mesmerizing than the last. The engagement ceremony banquet at the manor was definitely one of the imperial events of the highest caliber, and the people who came were all people of great status.

"Big Bro, I still feel really uncomfortable wearing this." Wharton had wasted quite a bit of his time in his room. He felt more nervous than he ever had before.

Linley laughed. "Enough, Wharton. You already look very handsome. Have some confidence!"

Wharton took a deep breath.

“Let’s go. Time to welcome the guests in the hall,” Linley laughingly lectured. “You can’t just keep on having Grandpa Hiri welcome the guests. For example, when his Imperial Majesty comes, how can you possibly not be out there to welcome him?”

Wharton and Linley entered the main hall, and as soon as they did, they breathed sharply. Good heavens. There were so many people there. What’s more, that was just a small portion of the nobles who would be present. Many senior personages hadn’t arrived yet.

“The imperial capital really is the imperial capital. There are far more nobles here than in Fenlai City.” Linley sighed.

In the past, Linley had participated in Alice and Kalan’s engagement ceremony. The number of people present that day clearly were far fewer than the number attending the ceremony today, and were clearly a much lower caliber of people as well.

The noble clans of a kingdom naturally were far fewer in number than the noble clans of an empire.

As soon as Linley and Wharton entered the main hall, they immediately became the center of attention. Wharton’s massive frame was simply too eye-catching, and many people went over there to greet him warmly.

“Wharton, come over here,” Housekeeper Hiri immediately called out to him.

Wharton immediately hastened over to the main door of the hall and began to greet each of the arriving guests. As for Linley, he filled a cup with wine, then casually walked to the center of the hall, occasionally clinking cups with the guests.

These nobles were very conscientious and didn’t try to get too close to Linley or bother him too much, only gently tipping their cups towards him from afar.

However...

Some of the young noble ladies had their eyes set on Linley. They knew that Linley was unmarried. A twenty-something-year-old peak-stage Saint-level expert... where would anyone find another man like this?

“What a headache.” Linley saw three separate young noble ladies begin to drift in his direction. Linley could only pretend not to have seen them.

When these three young noble ladies were a meter away from Linley...

“Whoosh.” A soft yet firm gust of wind suddenly pressed against their bodies. No matter what they tried, those three young noble ladies couldn’t move any closer towards Linley.

And then, Linley raised his cup, smiling faintly, before heading to a corner of the main hall and sitting down.

“Just then, Master Linley...” A golden-haired and golden-eyed beautiful young noble lady got excited. “What sort of amazing technique was that?”

The other two young noble ladies didn’t know either.

Not knowing wasn’t an issue. This didn’t impact Linley’s status in their heart. In fact, to the contrary; this made Linley seem all the more powerful and mysterious to them. Actually, what Linley had just used was just the simplest manipulations of the wind.

“Did you see Master Linley’s Dragonform transformation that day at the Colosseum? He seemed so wild and untamed. I was so excited.”

“He really is exciting. I like this type. Those men at school are all soft as cotton. None of them are extremely manly like him.”

Linley’s hearing was simply too good. Hearing what the young noble ladies were saying to each other, Linley felt a wave of resignation in his heart. They called his Dragonform transformation ‘wild and untamed’? And ‘extremely manly’?”

“His Imperial Majesty has arrived!”

The voice of the guest announcer at the main gates immediately increased in volume. He had clearly shouted using battle-qi, allowing all the guests in the hall to hear clearly.

The entire hall full of nobles fell silent as they all looked towards the gates. There were many nobles outside the hall as well. There were too many guests here today, and the hall simply couldn’t fit them all inside.

“Johann has arrived?” Linley stood up and left the hall.

“Milord,” the uniformed Gates called out towards Linley.

Today, all five of the Barker brothers were dressed in handsome matching uniforms. As they wandered around the manor, their massive size and frame made the hearts of the nobles quail. The nobles all secretly sighed... the Dragonblood Warrior clan lives up to its name. Even their guards were so incredible.

Emperor Johann was a sight to behold, as always. Holding the Empress’s hand, he was followed by a few bodyguards.

“Wharton.” Emperor Johann immediately picked out Wharton from the crowd. Seeing how handsome and strong Wharton looked, Johann nodded with satisfaction. “Not bad, not bad.”

Linley arrived.

“Your Imperial Majesty, come rest inside.” Linley laughed.

“Alright. We have much to discuss with you, Master Linley,” Emperor Johann said warmly. Immediately, the two of them entered the guest hall. As for the other nobles and ministers, they very conscientiously stepped aside for them.

So many of the nobles of the imperial capital had arrived today, but Linley hadn’t gone to welcome any of them. The nobles all felt that this was normal. A Saint-level expert, go welcome them? Was that possible?

“The Chairman of the Dawson Conglomerate has arrived!”

That high-pitched voice rang out again. The Chairman of the Dawson Conglomerate, one of the three major trading unions of the Yulan Continent. Although the Dawson Conglomerate didn’t actually possess any Saint-level experts, it still possessed astonishing economic power.

Even Emperor Johann stood up and said to Linley, “Monroe Dawson is one of Our good friends.”

Linley rose as well.

Yale was sure to have come alongside Monroe Dawson. Of course Linley would go welcome them.

“Haha...” The big-bellied Monroe Dawson made his way over, with Yale by his father’s side. Seeing Emperor Johann, Monroe Dawson immediately bowed slightly. “Monroe pays his respects to the mighty Emperor Johann.”

Emperor Johann smiled warmly. “Monroe, today, Linley is the master of this location. There’s no need for you to stand on too much courtesy with Us.”

“Master Linley and I have been friends for a long time. Only, I didn’t expect that in a few scant years, Master Linley had reached such a level of accomplishment. Haha...” Monroe Dawson laughed so hard his eyes turned into merry slits.

“Uncle Dawson, just call me Linley.” Linley smiled as he spoke. He and Yale were the best of bros. Naturally, he had to be respectful to Yale’s father.

“Wharton, come and greet Uncle Dawson.”

Wharton came over as well.

“What a handsome, strapping young lad.” Monroe Dawson’s eyes lit up when he saw Wharton. Clearly, Wharton’s size and stature had surprised him.

One noble after another arrived, and even Blumer arrived. Blumer acted in an extremely gentlemanly manner today, and even spent some time congratulating Wharton.

But Wharton, in his heart, still felt rather uncomfortable around Blumer. He kept on feeling that Blumer wasn’t speaking sincerely.

“Blumer, your elder brother didn’t come today?” Emperor Johann laughed as he spoke to Blumer.

“My elder brother is currently in closed-door meditation training, in preparation for his duel with Lord Haydson next month.” Blumer smiled.

“Oh. Makes sense.” Emperor Johann nodded.

Blumer then glanced towards Wharton, who was welcoming guests at the gate. A cold light flashed in his eyes. In his heart, Blumer was very unhappy that Wharton had managed to successfully ask for Nina’s hand in marriage.

“The Monolithic Sword Saint, Lord Haydson, has arrived!”

When the voice rang out, Emperor Johann, Linley, Monroe Dawson, and many others immediately rose to their feet and headed out the hall.

“Haydson came?” Linley was very surprised and pleased. He had thought that Haydson would be busy preparing for next month’s duel.

Very soon, the gray-robed Haydson walked in by himself. Emperor Johann, Linley, Wharton, and the others all went to welcome him.

“Haha, Wharton, congratulations.” A very friendly smile was on Haydson’s face. He then looked at Linley. Jokingly, he said, “Linley, your little brother is getting engaged. What about you, the Big Brother?”

Linley started. He hadn’t expected Haydson to ask such a question.

“Hahaha...” Emperor Johann began to laugh loudly as well, nodding repeatedly. “Linley, it really is time for you to get married. If you take a fancy to someone, just tell Us. We will definitely make sure that lucky girl is sent to you.”

Linley didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry.

“Lords from the War God’s College have arrived!”

This call from the gate extricated Linley from having to answer the question, as they all went to welcome the people from the War God’s College.

“I didn’t expect that the War God’s College would also send people over.” Emperor Johann sighed emotionally.

Haydson nodded as well. The War God’s College was one of the most major organizations in the Yulan continent. They rarely participated in engagement or wedding events, unless it was the event of one of their own people. Only then would the other fellow apprentices attend.

Lanke and Castro walked in, side by side.

Castro smiled. “Haha, brother Wharton, congratulations.” As Castro figured, given how well-disposed his master was towards Wharton, then Wharton was qualified to be addressed by him as ‘brother Wharton’.

But this term of address baffled Linley, Johann, Haydson, and the others.

The members of the War God’s College were extremely arrogant.

They rarely paid much attention to other people. Castro's attitude really caused quite a few people to feel puzzled.

"Today, we two fellow apprentices have come here as representatives of the entire War God's College to congratulate you, Wharton, on this joyful occasion. This is the gift that our master personally instructed us to bring you." Castro directly held out a brocade box towards Wharton.

Master?

Everyone around them was stunned. The War God was giving a gift?

"We are incredibly grateful." Linley was the first to recover. Smiling, he accepted the congratulatory gift. "Castro, Lanke, come, have a rest over here."

Generally speaking, the servants would accept any congratulatory gifts at the gate... but how would the gift registrars of the Count's manor dare to take the gifts from people belonging to the War God's College? Even if they had come empty-handed, it would have been an honor.

The Count's manor was a hubbub of noise. Many high ranking nobles such as Dukes and Counts were all chatting amongst themselves, while Linley, Emperor Johan, Monroe Dawson, Castro, Lanke, Haydson, and the others chatted casually as well.

The guests at this engagement ceremony were all absolutely incredible.

Just look at the seating arrangements. At Linley's table, the only people present aside from Saint-level experts were an Emperor and the Chairman of a Conglomerate. Just at this moment...

"A Saint-level expert is flying over." Many people called out. Linley glanced through the door at the sky, and indeed, saw a human form gracefully soaring through the clouds.

Linley, Emperor Johann, and the others all rose to their feet in confusion.

But no matter who it was, given this person was a Saint-level expert, they had to give him some face.

With a mid-air flash, the man arrived at the main gate. This was a white-haired old man, with a white beard as well. Clearly, he was ancient, but his

dreamy, sky-blue eyes were very sharp.

“Haha, I came uninvited. I hope I won’t be unwelcome here?” The white-haired old man laughed heartily.

He didn’t even look at Wharton and the others, instead flying directly towards the place where Linley and the others had been seated. As he drew near, Haydson and Castro hurriedly stepped out of his way, and the white-haired old man sat down on the seat previously occupied by the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson.

“This is a pretty good seat. I’ll sit here.” The white-haired old man laughed loudly.

Emperor Johann frowned. This man was a bit too impolite. Linley, as well, felt that this white-haired old man was a little too arrogant.

“Might I ask—” Before Linley even had a chance to finish his words, the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, quickly said in an extremely courteously voice, “I didn’t expect you would come here, milord. This truly is an unexpected surprise for us.”

By his side, both Castro and Lanke hurriedly nodded their heads in assent. Their attitudes were unbelievably humble.

Experts of Other Planes

Linley, Emperor Johann, and the others were all puzzled. Who in the world was this mysterious white-haired old man? Even the number one Saint-level expert, Haydson, was incredibly deferential to him.

“Could it be the War God?” Linley secretly wondered.

Most likely, only a Deity could make Haydson be this deferential. And clearly, both Castro and Lanke recognized this person as well. He was most likely the War God.

“Add a chair,” Housekeeper Hiri instructed a nearby servant.

Linley took a step forward. Smiling, he said, “Sir, we two brothers feel extremely honored to have you attend my younger brother’s engagement ceremony. Might I know your name, sir?”

“Me?” The white-haired old man glanced smilingly at Linley. “My name is Hodan.”

“Hodan?” Linley quickly combed through his memory, but he definitely didn’t recall an expert by the name of Hodan.

“Linley, no need to ask anything else. It is wonderful that Lord Hodan is able to attend today. Let’s all sit down first,” the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, said with a laugh.

Although Linley and Emperor Johann and the others were mystified, they all sat down.

“Milord, let us offer you a toast, milord.” Castro and Lanke both raised their cups.

Milord?

A few things suddenly came to Linley’s awareness.

First of all, most likely only a Deity was capable of making a Saint-level expert address them as 'milord'. At the same time... if Castro and Lanke addressed him as 'milord' and not as 'Master', then this person was most likely not the War God.

The continent had five prominent Deities. Linley had already met Dylin and Cesar, while he had yet to meet the High Priest, the War God, and the King of the Forest of Darkness. The white-haired old man should therefore be one of those three.

He was now certain that this man was not the War God.

So this person should be either the High Priest or the King of the Forest of Darkness.

"However, it has been countless years since those two Deities showed themselves. How could Haydson, Castro, and Lanke all recognize him?" Linley refused to believe it.

A Deity-level expert didn't make appearances so easily.

"Linley." The white-haired old man named 'Hodan' raised his cup. "Come, let us toast each other."

Linley hurriedly raised his cup.

"When I see you, Linley, I think about the past affairs of your Baruch clan and those several Dragonblood Warriors. Haha... unexpectedly, several thousand years have passed in the blink of an eye." Hodan laughed merrily.

These words caused Linley's heart to twitch, hard.

"Those several Dragonblood Warriors of the Baruch clan? Thousands of years ago?" Linley looked at Hodan with confusion.

In his own clan's history books, there had been three generations of Dragonblood Warriors, but later on, a thousand years would pass between each generation of Dragonblood Warriors.

But this Hodan was saying that thousands of years ago, he had met several Dragonblood Warriors?

"I didn't know that Elder Hodan knew the ancestors of my clan." Linley

laughed.

“Of course. Your clan leader, Baruch, really is a formidable fellow,” Hodan said with feeling. “But your Baruch clan has really decayed. In the past, when you had dozens of Dragonblood Warriors, who would dare offend you? Such a pity, such a pity...”

Linley stared.

“Dozens of Dragonblood Warriors?” Linley and Wharton both looked at Hodan in shock.

“What, is that surprising?” Hodan looked at Linley and Wharton.

Haydson hurriedly said, “Milord, it would be best if you discuss this somewhere else. There are too many people here.” It was best if they didn’t reveal these secrets to the ordinary nobles.

“It is fine. Only the people at this table can hear us. As for the people outside of it, no matter how loudly we speak, they won’t be able to overhear anything.” Hodan chortled.

There were eight people at this table. Aside from Wharton, Emperor Johann, and Monroe Dawson, the others all possessed at least Saint-level power, with the white-haired old man’s power being immeasurably deeper.

“Dozens of Dragonblood Warriors?”

Linley and Wharton could hardly dare to believe it.

Their ancestral records were very clear; the first three generations of their clan produced three Dragonblood Warriors, after which a thousand years would pass between Dragonblood Warriors. In total, there had been only five. How could there have been dozens of Dragonblood Warriors a few thousand years back?”

“The Four Supreme Warrior clans... alas. All have decayed to a sorry state. In the past, the Four Supreme Warrior clans were quite glorious,” Hodan said with emotion.

Linley suddenly thought of something.

He remembered how in the ‘Secret Dragonblood Manual’, there were

instructions on the second way by which one could become a Dragonblood Warrior; drinking live dragon's blood. But based on that manual, all three Dragonblood Warriors were natural-born Dragonblood Warriors.

If the second method had never been used successfully, why would the Secret Dragonblood Manual record it?

In the past, both Linley and Doehring Cowart had suspected that the manual had been altered. His clan's history should probably have included examples of Dragonblood Warriors who were produced via drinking live dragon's blood.

"But I didn't expect there were dozens!" Both Linley and Wharton felt extremely shocked internally.

"Oh, that little girl named Nina is coming over." The white-haired old man, Hodan, beamed, causing Linley and the other shocked participants to turn and look.

Linley and the others all stood up, and Wharton immediately went over to welcome Nina.

Holding hands, Wharton and Nina went from table to table, toasting the guests. But right now, both Wharton and Linley, who remained at his seat, felt their minds to be in a state of utter confusion.

Their clan's history clearly wasn't as simple as they had imagined.

In addition...

Saint-level experts had extremely long lifespans. How could it be that not a single Dragonblood Warrior in their clan was remaining? And not just their clan; even the Undying Warrior clan, the Violetflame Warrior clan, and the Tigerstripe Warrior clan had seen the same thing. All of the Four Supreme Warrior clans had bizarrely collapsed.

"Secret..." Linley understood that the history of the continent definitely contained many hidden secrets that were different from the official accounts.

For example, the King of Killers, Cesar, had once told Linley that five thousand years ago, many experts from other planes of existence had descended to the plane of the Yulan continent. But in the history books, there was no such thing.

Linley found himself somewhat mentally disengaged as the engagement ceremony continued. He kept on thinking about these things.

He even wanted to have a private chat with that white-haired old man named Hodan.

Clearly, this Hodan person knew many things about the affairs of the past.

After dinner, the various nobles in the main hall were chatting idly. At this time, Linley, who had grown frantic with impatience, suddenly heard a sentence that was as beautiful as music from the heavens.

“Linley, come with me. I have something to discuss with you.”

Hodan actually reached out to Linley and actively asked to speak to him privately.

Wharton looked at his older brother, and Linley instructed, “Wharton, you stay here. Afterwards, go spend some time with Nina. As for Mr. Hodan, I’ll speak with him.” As he spoke, Linley followed Hodan out of the main hall.

Haydson, Castro, and Lanke all glanced at each other.

“I wonder what Linley will decide.” Haydson sighed with emotion.

Hodan and Linley left the main hall. While walking, Hodan said, “Linley, where are those two Saint-level magical beast experts of yours? Call them over as well.”

Linley was startled.

How did this Hodan know everything?

Hodan knew the names of Wharton and Nina, and he also knew that Linley had two magical beasts. He even knew that Bebe was a Saint-level magical beast.

Linley didn’t try to deny anything. He immediately spiritually contacted Bebe and Haeru, calling them over. Since there were Saint-level experts present today, Linley hadn’t allowed Bebe or Haeru to go to the main hall.

“Let’s go to the training grounds behind the manor. There’s nobody there.” Hodan chuckled.

“Groooooowl.”

Haeru and Bebe arrived by Linley’s side.

“Squeaaaak!” Bebe continued to pretend.

“Little fellow, I know that you are a Saint-level magical beast. Stop squeaking.” Hodan laughed as he reached out to rub Bebe on the head. Bebe wanted to move aside, but to his astonishment, he found that it was impossible for him to move. He had no choice but to allow Hodan to rub his head.

Linley was secretly shocked.

Without question, Hodan was a Deity-level expert.

“He really is a Deity. How many Deities does the continent have?” Linley thought to himself, while at the same time, he followed Hodan to the training grounds.

“Boss, who is that old fellow? How is he so powerful?” Bebe didn’t dare to be too playful right now, appearing very obedient.

Haeru obediently followed by Linley’s side as well.

“Close the door first. Without my orders, no one is to be permitted entry,” Linley instructed the servants, and then Hodan headed directly to a stone bench and sat down.

“You can sit as well.” Hodan pointed to another seat opposite from him.

Linley sat down obediently, then said humbly, “Mr. Hodan, I am totally lost right now. Can you please provide me with guidance?”

“The reason I came today is primarily for the sake of your two magical beasts.” Hodan smiled. “Of course, you and those three other Undying Warriors who possess the Saint level of power can also just barely be considered qualified to be worthy of being considered my targets.”

“Hrm?” Linley looked at Hodan with confusion.

Hodan smiled. “Linley, in the countless years of the Yulan continent’s history, there have been countless geniuses as well. Even if there is only one every century, in a hundred thousand years, that means there have been a thousand.

But right now, how many Saint-level experts exist in the Yulan continent? Each Empire only has a few dozen.”

“Saint-level experts can live for over a hundred thousand years?” Linley said in shock.

“Saint-level experts, so long as they aren’t killed, can easily live a hundred thousand years.” Hodan laughed calmly. “Upon reaching the Saint level, you are virtually immortal and immune to aging. However, you can still be killed, of course.”

Linley was also puzzled.

If this was the case, why were there so few Saint-level experts? After all, the Yulan continent definitely saw a new Saint-level expert every century.

“Then what is the reason?” Linley asked.

“The reason is... they’ve gone to other planes.” Hodan smiled.

“Other planes?” Linley started.

But then, Linley suddenly understood, and he hurriedly asked, “Could it be that the ancestors of the Baruch clan have also gone to other planes?”

“Right. Those dozens of Dragonblood Warriors have all gone to the ‘Infernal Realm’, one of the Four Higher Planes. In the past, I even visited your ancestor, Baruch, in the Infernal Realm and drank with him.” Hodan laughed heartily.

“The Infernal Realm. Mr. Hodan, you come from the Infernal Realm?” Linley felt as though the secrets of the universe were unfolding before his very eyes.

Hodan nodded. “Right. Linley, let me put it to you like this... in the ordinary, material world, once a life form has reached the Saint level, they will be qualified to enter the Four Higher Planes, or perhaps the Seven Divine Planes. They will be permitted to train and live there.”

“In the history of the Yulan continent, many Saint-level experts have already left the Yulan continent and chosen to enter the Four Higher Planes or the Seven Divine Planes.” Hodan smiled.

Linley nodded to show he understood.

“Technically speaking, you and those other three Undying Warriors, despite possessing Saint-level power, aren’t yet at the Saint level in your human forms. There was actually no need for me to hurry over here to speak to you. My primary targets were those two Saint-level magical beasts of yours. They have both reached the Saint level. They are allowed to choose... to continue to live here at the Yulan continent, or to enter the other planes.”

Hodan quickly said with a hint of enticement, “The Four Higher Planes are much better than the Seven Divine Planes. In the ‘Infernal Realm’, for example, experts as are common as the clouds, and Saint-level experts are nothing more than ordinary people. In that place you will have excellent training opportunities, and treasures such as interspatial rings are as common as water. There’s a terrifyingly large amount of treasures there.”

Linley understood.

Only upon reaching the Saint level was one qualified to enter the Higher Planes. Naturally, the Four Higher Planes would have experts everywhere, with Saint-level experts being nothing more than commoners.

“I’m not going. I’m staying with the Boss.” Bebe shook his head.

“I’m not going either. I’m staying with my master,” Haeru said.

Hodan looked at Linley. Laughing, he said, “Linley, your real power has already reached the peak-stage of the Saint level. You are completely qualified to enter the Higher Planes. Do you wish to go?”

Linley didn’t respond. Instead, he looked at Hodan. “Mr. Hodan, who are you, exactly?”

“Me? Oh. I forgot to tell you.” Hodan smiled at Linley. “I am the Planar Overseer for the Yulan continent.”

A Choice

“Planar Overseer?”

Hearing this title, Linley somewhat understood. The term ‘overseer’ contained elements of both ‘watching over’ and ‘protecting’. No wonder this Hodan possessed such astonishing strength.

“Linley, you haven’t answered me yet. Are you willing to go to the other planes?” Hodan urged.

It was up to each individual Saint-level as to whether or not they wished to go to the higher planes. The Planar Overseer was only responsible for telling them about this choice.

Linley remained very calm.

“Mr. Hodan, honestly speaking, I don’t know anything about the other planes. Can you perhaps enlighten me a bit?” Linley asked humbly.

Doehring Cowart actually knew about the existence of the Planar Overseer, but at the time, Linley was far too weak, and so Doehring Cowart didn’t see a need to tell Linley right away. But Doehring Cowart had explained a little bit about the Four Higher Planes.

“There are many material planes such as the Yulan continent. These material planes are all about the same. In some, magical beasts are the primary power, while in others, other races are in power. In some, humans are in power. These planes are essentially the same.” Hodan began explaining some of the most basic information regarding the Higher Planes.

“Above these material planes are the Four Higher Planes and the Seven Divine Planes.” Hodan laughed. “The Seven Divine Planes were created by the seven principal Sovereigns of the seven elements. As for the Four Higher Planes, they were created by the four Overgods.”

Linley nodded.

“The Seven Divine Planes and the Four Higher Planes... what are the differences between them?” Linley asked.

Hodan laughed. “The Seven Divine Planes are planes of earth, fire, water, wind, lightning, light, and darkness. For example, you are someone who is training in the Laws of the Earth. If you were to enter the Divine Plane of Earth, you would find that you trained twice as fast using half the effort.”

“However, the Seven Divine Planes are inferior to the Four Higher Planes. It’s best if you enter the Higher Realms,” Hodan said enticingly. “Linley, you must understand, the Higher Planes were created by the Overgods. The four Overgods far outstrip the power of the Sovereigns.”

“Overgods? Can anyone reach the level of Overgod through training?” Linley suddenly asked.

Hodan stared at Linley in astonishment.

“Haha...” Hodan began to roar with laughter, as though he had heard the funniest joke ever.

Linley looked at Hodan in confusion.

“Linley, it seems you really know nothing.” Hodan laughed. “You have no idea. The Overgods aren’t people who reached that level through training. Let me explain to you. Every single race has the chance to become a Sovereign through training; the chance is just extremely, extremely low...”

“How low?” Linley asked.

“Let me give an example. In a hundred million ordinary Deities, it would be rare for a single Sovereign to appear.” Hodan laughed. “For example, in the Divine Realm of Light, there are countless Demigods, Gods, and Highgods. But in ten million years, you might not see a single Sovereign appear from their ranks.”

Linley was silent.

“Demigods, Gods, and Highgods?” Linley frowned as he looked at Hodan in confusion.

In the past, Grandpa Doehring had only discussed the existence of 'Gods'. He didn't explain further.

"The 'divine spark' of Deities are of different levels as well," Hodan said calmly. "Once you reach a certain level of mastery with regards to the Laws, the Laws will themselves grant you their recognition and descend into you a 'divine spark', allowing you to become a Deity. But when you begin, you'll only be a Demigod. As you continue to understand more... at a certain level, you will become a God."

Only now did Linley understand.

"What level of Deity is the War God?" Linley asked with curiosity.

Hodan glanced at Linley with irritation, then laughed. "For the sake of your ancestors, I'll tell you. The War God... is only a Demigod."

"A Demigod?" Linley blinked twice.

Good heavens. The War God had become a Deity over five thousand years ago. Given his talent, he should be much more powerful now than before. How could he still just be a Demigod?

"Haha, Linley, do you think it is easy to advance from being a Demigod to a God?" Hodan shook his head.

"But the War God was a Demigod five thousand years ago," Linley immediately said.

"At that time, he was indeed a Demigod. But there are differences amongst Demigods as well. For example, let's say that to become a Demigod, one must master 1% of a Law, while to become a God, one must master 10% of a Law. Someone who only mastered 9% of a Law is only a Demigod... but is he on the same level of power as someone who mastered 1% of a Law? Even though they are both Demigods?" Hodan explained in a simplified way.

Linley now understood.

"Linley, don't be too greedy. On the road to becoming a Deity, every single step is extremely arduous. There have been countless Demigods in the Four Higher Planes who have spent hundreds of millions of years, or even billions of

years, without being able to break through from the Demigod-level to the God-level.”

“But what about the Overgods?” Linley immediately said.

“The Overgods?” Hodan laughed again. “You were asking me earlier if it was possible for humans to reach the Overgod-level, right? Let me explain...”

“The Overgods...” Hodan continued to snicker at Linley. “Linley, the Overgods aren’t people, nor do they have genders. They don’t even have bodies.”

“Uh?” Linley stared at Hodan in surprise.

“The four Overgods are manifestations of the Four Prime Laws. They are nothing more than the very embodiment of the Laws that flow through the countless planes! The Overgod of Death is the embodiment of the Laws of Death. The Overgod of Destruction is the incarnation of the Laws of Destruction. The Overgod of Life is the avatar of the Laws of Life. And the Overgod of Fate is the personification of the Laws of Fate!”

Hodan laughed as he looked at Linley. “You tell me. Can you become an Overgod through training?”

Linley understood.

The four Overgods were a natural part of the infinite planes of the universe. They were the heavens, they were the earth... they were part of the souls of every living creature.

They were the Laws themselves!

“The Overgods are beings of pure Law. They know nothing of love, hate, friendship, grudges, or other such emotions. They are cold. If you cursed an Overgod, they would ignore you. If you flattered them, they will not reward you. However...if you were to damage the planes themselves, then the Overgods would punish you.”

Linley laughed.

Although the Overgods existed, they were the personification of the Laws of the universe. There was no need to pay them any heed or attention at all.

“Curse an Overgod? Someone would dare to curse an Overgod?” Linley asked,

laughing.

Hodan stared at him, then laughingly berated Linley, “I was just giving an example. In all my years in the Netherworld, I’ve never heard of an Overgod manifesting in person. As far as you should be concerned, the most invincible power in the world is the power of the Sovereigns. The will of the Sovereigns is not to be disobeyed!”

Linley nodded, signifying understanding.

“Linley, the Seven Divine Planes are extremely beneficial for someone training in a particular Law. But the Four Higher Planes are different. No matter what sort of Law you are studying, the speed at which you train in the Four Higher Planes will be as fast as if you were training in the relevant Law in one of the Seven Divine Planes,” Hodan said persuasively. “Thus, the Four Higher Planes are the best choices.”

The Four Higher Planes – the Celestial Realm, the Netherworld, the Infernal Realm, and the Life Realm.

“Linley. The ancestors of your clan are all in the Infernal Realm. Why don’t you go there as well?” Hodan continued.

Go?

Linley had already made up his mind.

The Infernal Realm only had the ancestors he had never met. There wasn’t much point going there. By contrast, in the Yulan continent, he had his younger brother Wharton, and his dear bros, Yale, Reynolds, and George. He also had many friends such as Barker, his brothers, Jenne, and the others.

In addition...

He also had a goal that was unfinished. The utter destruction of the Radiant Church.

Seeing Linley’s hesitation, Hodan continued to speak persuasively. “Linley, the Infernal Realm has countless races and all sorts of powerful species of creatures, which have all sorts of attacks. In the Infernal Realm, training is extremely exciting.”

“No need.”

Linley shook his head and laughed. “Mr. Hodan, thank you for telling me so much. However, I am still young, and I haven’t even gotten married. I’m in no rush to go there.”

Hearing Linley say this, Hodan could only nod with resignation.

As the Planar Overseer, he was forbidden from forcing people to leave this plane. If others were unwilling to leave, they could remain in their own plane as long as they liked, even to the point of becoming a Highgod.

“Mr. Hodan, I wish to ask you, if one goes to a Higher Plane, can one return?” Linley suddenly asked.

Hodan shook his head. “It is virtually impossible. Out of hundred thousand people who enter a Higher Plane, there usually isn’t even a single person who can come back to his homeland. This is because returning home carries an extremely high price.”

Linley understood.

No wonder the War God and the High Priest were unwilling to go to the Higher Planes. For even Deity-level experts to be unwilling to go, one could imagine how difficult returning was.

Not even one out of a hundred thousand would be able to return.

This probability was simply too low.

“Mr. Hodan, I’m so sorry to have wasted your time,” Linley said humbly.

“Since that’s the case, I’ll leave now.” Hodan stood up. “Linley, if one day you wish to leave this plane, you can come to the Arctic Icecap at the end of the North Sea to find me. I live atop a glacier in the Arctic Icecap.”

Linley felt surprised.

“The Arctic Icecap?” This was the first time Linley had heard that at the end of the North Sea, there was an ‘Arctic Icecap’.

“Mr. Hodan, what about at the end of the South Sea?” Linley was curious.

“The South Sea is far larger than the North Sea, and is virtually boundless. But

at the end of it... at the end of it is the end of the Yulan plane. You'll find nothing there but chaotic space.

Linley now understood.

After speaking, Hodan immediately flew into the air and left, heading north and quickly disappearing. Linley stood there, not moving for a long time.

This discussion with Hodan had a major impact on Linley.

"Boss, I'm actually pretty curious about the Higher Planes. Wow. All sorts of amazing species, and Saint-levels are just ordinary people there. That place must be awesome." Bebe's eyes were gleaming.

Linley patted Bebe on his little head. "Do you want to die?" Most likely, any expert in that plane could easily kill them.

Linley already had a plan for his future training.

Sovereign? That was too far away.

One step at a time. First, reach the Demigod-level. Upon becoming a Demigod, Linley would have confidence in his ability to destroy the Radiant Church.

Linley knew his own limits. Given his current power, he wasn't yet strong enough to impose his will upon and act as he pleased in the Yulan continent.

"It's hard to say if I'd even be able to defeat Olivier." Linley didn't feel any confidence at all when it came to Olivier's spiritual attack in his obsidian sword.

Spiritual attack?

Linley suddenly thought of his Coiling Dragon ring. In the past, when divine power had entered Linley's soul, a burst of power had emanated from the Coiling Dragon ring to counter it.

"But Grandpa Doehring was also a master of the Coiling Dragon ring in the past. Why is it that at the point of his death, the ring didn't help him?" Linley was puzzled.

The mysterious power of the Coiling Dragon had to be activated somehow.

The divine power of the Radiant Sovereign had done just that, somehow

agitating the power in the Coiling Dragon ring, causing it to manifest protectively. But Olivier's attack wouldn't necessarily also activate the Coiling Dragon ring's protective energy.

"I have no idea what secrets lie hidden within the Coiling Dragon ring. But no matter what, I can't just put all my hopes on the Coiling Dragon ring. In battle, the only one I can rely on is myself."

Right now, the manor was filled with countless nobles and magnates, but Linley and his two magical beasts remained in the training courtyard in the rear of the manor. As if no one was present, Linley began to train.

"After going to the Infernal Realm, returning will be almost impossible. I can't possibly hope that I will receive any support from my ancestors. Everything that I do in the Yulan continent, I will have to rely on myself."

But Linley had forgotten something. Why was it that the dozens of Dragonblood Warriors as well as all of the other Supreme Warriors had left the Yulan continent en masse, and hadn't left even a single Saint-level expert behind to look after their descendants?

The waters of the Yulan continent were far deeper than Linley could imagine.

The War God's College

By nightfall, many of the guests at the manor had left, and most of the nobles were now gone. The engagement banquet was an afternoon banquet. The people still remaining at the manor were all relatively important guests.

“Wharton, where is your Big Brother?” Yale poured two cups of wine, then walked to Wharton’s side. “I haven’t seen him for almost the entire afternoon, I think?”

“My Big Brother left with that Mr. Hodan. No clue where he went.” Wharton shook his head.

“I’ll go look for him. Given your Big Brother’s personality, he might have run off to the training yard and started to train.” Yale left the guest hall. Making his way down the corridors, he arrived at the training courtyard after a while.

“Drip.” “Drip.”

Water flowed down the manmade fountain. Each drip-drop of water could be heard clearly in the silent training courtyard. Linley was seated in the meditative trance on the grass, not moving at all.

If one moved closer and examined him carefully, one might see that Linley’s muscles were contracting and expanding in a very rhythmic way. And as they did, a natural gust of wind seemed to have surrounded Linley.

His spirit had become one with the endless earth and attuned to the boundless wind.

“Boom!” “Boom!” ...

“Whoosh!” “Whoosh!” ...

His eyes shut, Linley could feel the trembling, vibrating spirit of the earth, and the formless wind that filled the skies. After a long time, Linley opened his eyes.

“His lordship issued the order that no one is to be permitted to enter without his permission.”

“Not even me?” Yale sounded very resigned.

“Boss Yale, come in.” Linley had a hint of a smile on his lips, and he immediately stood up. Only now did Yale walk in. Looking at Linley, he chuckled, “Third Bro, I knew it. You are training again. Why are you so hard working? You are already a peak-stage Saint-level. You are already incredibly powerful.”

Linley glanced at Yale and chuckled.

To Yale, Linley could already be considered a peerless expert in the Yulan continent. Even the Emperor of the O’Brien Empire was incredibly courteous to Linley. But after having interacted with Hodan, Linley knew that he was still far from being adequate.

“Come, have some wine with me. I haven’t had much of a chance to drink with you today.” Yale put down two flasks of wine on the stone table.

Linley sat down as well, then retrieved two wine cups from his interspatial ring.

“It’s a pity that Fourth Bro couldn’t be here.” Linley shook his head and sighed. A month ago, when Emperor Johann had announced who would marry his daughter, Reynolds had left the imperial capital.

“He had no choice. The army had ordered him to return. He had to go,” Yale said helplessly. “Last time, he just so happened to be on leave, which was why we three bros were able to have a reunion. It isn’t so bad for Fourth Bro, but for Second Bro... if we want to see him, we have to go to the Yulan Empire.”

The distance from the Yulan Empire to the O’Brien Empire was quite far.

Chatting idly with his dear bro, Linley felt extremely cheerful. Why would he want to give this up to go to a Higher Plane and engage in slaughter?

The most enjoyable part of training was in the spirit, gaining a greater and greater level of understanding. It wasn’t about the bloody slaughter.

“Third Bro, in a few days, I’ll leave the imperial capital as well.” Yale sighed emotionally. “Nothing for it. I’m still young. There are many things that the

Conglomerate needs me to handle. Otherwise, in the future, I won't be qualified to manage it."

Linley understood.

An organization on the level of the Dawson Conglomerate definitely wouldn't award someone the leadership position just because one's father previously held it. Otherwise, the Dawson Conglomerate wouldn't be as powerful as it currently was. Of course, being the son of the Chairman had its advantages, but one also needed to have ability and a work history.

"Next month, Olivier will be doing battle with the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson. Doesn't that mean you'll miss it?" Linley laughed.

"Yeah." Yale laughed uncaringly. "I'm just a magus anyhow. How much would I understand from watching a battle between two Saint-level warriors?"

Linley suddenly put down his wine cup and looked at the door. "Someone is coming."

"Who?" Yale was puzzled. "Someone else knows that you are here?"

"Those two from the War God's College." Linley laughed calmly.

Saint-level experts could use spiritual energy to scan an area. The comparatively tiny manor could easily be completely covered by it. Naturally, they could easily locate Linley.

Castro and Lanke walked towards the back courtyard side by side. They were very surprised by their master's instructions.

"Although Linley's strength is not bad, there's no need for Master to act this way." Lanke shook his head.

"I don't understand either." Castro also felt puzzled.

Both of them were confused. Walking into the back courtyard, they saw that the guards had opened the door for them already. Castro and Lanke exchanged a glance.

"Linley knew that we were coming."

Castro and Lanke immediately saw Linley seated alongside Yale. Seeing that

Yale was here as well, the two frowned.

Yale immediately stood up. "Third Bro, people have come to see you. Why don't you have a chat with them? I'll go to the main hall for now."

Linley nodded.

After Yale left, Castro and Lanke sat down. Linley asked, "Castro, Lanke, why have you come?"

Castro laughed. "Linley, the two of us have come bearing an invitation from our master to pay a visit to the War God's College."

"The War God is inviting me to the War God's College?" Linley could hardly believe it.

How could someone like the War God be inviting him?

Lanke nodded. "Linley, Master did indeed instruct us to have you come to the War God's College. And what's more, Master has instructed our senior apprentice-brother to welcome you personally. Linley, you must understand, even when the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, visited the War God's College in the past, our senior apprentice-brother didn't come to welcome him."

"Oh?"

Linley was intrigued. Who was this 'senior apprentice-brother' of the War God's College?

"Your senior apprentice-brother should be the first disciple of the War God, right? Wait... how old is he?" Linley suddenly came to a realization. Good heavens. The War God was someone who had reached this level over five thousand years ago.

Castro and Lanke both grinned.

"Right. Our senior apprentice-brother is already five thousand years old. He isn't much younger than our master." Castro nodded. "We were very surprised as well when we heard that Master instructed our senior apprentice-brother to welcome you."

Linley knew that the War God only accepted a personal disciple every three hundred years.

The youngest one was Blumer, only thirty years old or so. But the oldest was this senior apprentice-brother, and was five thousand years old.

“Alright. When should I go?” Linley asked with a laugh.

“You can come to the War God’s College at any time. How about this? Here’s my insignia. When you arrive at the War God’s College, hand it to one of our fellow apprentices. They will inform me.” With a flip of his hand, Castro retrieved a scarlet red medal which had Castro’s name carved onto it.

Accepting the insignia, Linley laughed and nodded. “Don’t worry. I will definitely go.”

Castro and Lanke both nodded, then left.

Linley secretly wondered to himself... if the senior apprentice-brother of the War God’s College was five thousand years old, how powerful was he?

Could he be weaker than the Monolithic Sword Saint?

Linley didn’t much believe it. The Monolithic Sword Saint was only a few centuries old, while the senior apprentice-brother had been training in the War God’s College for thousands of years with the War God’s personal guidance. After five thousand years, how could he possibly not be strong?



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The primary peak of the War God Mountain was covered with many buildings. These were the places where the honorary disciples of the War God stayed, along with Kenyon, Castro, and Lanke, who were in charge of the ordinary affairs of War God Mountain, great or small.

The mountain wind was very strong this day. Many of the honorary disciples of the War God’s College were training.

“Haaargh!”

A boulder weighing dozens of tons was easily tossed from one person to another, who in turn kicked it back... the two honorary disciples of the war God’s College were able to easily kick around this massive boulder.

Most importantly, the boulder wasn't damaged at all.

This required a very fine control of both physical strength and battle-qi.

Right at this time, a graceful figure appeared, soaring across the sky like blue smoke. It gracefully circled around War God Mountain, and in the blink of an eye it arrived at the War God's College.

"Hrm?" One of the honorary disciples of the War God's College looked at the arrival with surprise. He hadn't seen anyone earlier, but then all of a sudden, this person had appeared.

"Are you... Master Linley?" The honorary disciple could recognize him. On the day of the duel at the Colosseum, the honorary disciple had gone to support Blumer.

Smiling, Linley nodded. "Castro invited me to come. This is his insignia. Please go inform him." Linley tossed the insignia to the honorary disciple.

The honorary disciple hurriedly said, "I'll go report it right away. Master Linley, please take a rest first."

Linley nodded. Wharton's engagement ceremony had concluded two days ago, and today, Linley had accepted the invitation and headed off to the War God's College to see for himself what it was all about.

"That person is Master Linley. I hear he's only twenty-seven years old."

"Even apprentice-brother Kenyon was easily defeated by him."

"I was there that day. It only took one blow. Compared to Linley, apprentice-brother Kenyon is very weak."

"Apprentice-brother Kenyon is only the 25th personal disciple of our master. It is understandable that he is a bit weaker. Most likely, apprentice-brother Castro is roughly on par with Linley. If the first ten disciples of Master had been the ones to do battle, most likely they would have easily beat Linley."

Many of the honorary disciples of the War God's College murmured in quiet voices while casting glances at Linley. All of these honorary disciples were geniuses in their own right, and they were all proud and arrogant. But compared to Linley, they had a long way to go.

“Linley,” a bright voice rang out.

Castro ran out, his face wreathed in smiles. “You came after all. Come, let’s go to Bluethunder Peak.”

“Not here?” Linley was puzzled.

Clearly, this primary peak was the largest one with the most buildings. The other four peaks didn’t have much construction.

Castro laughed. “Linley, we have many honorary disciples here at the War God’s College, so we let them stay at the main peaks. Myself, Lanke, and Kenyon all stay here because we are in charge of them. The rest of our fellow apprentices are all on the other mountain peaks.”

Linley nodded slightly.

Castro immediately led Linley in the direction of a different mountain peak. Linley and Castro walked up the steep mountain walls as easily as if they were travelling on flat land, their steps as graceful as flying birds.

“Castro, you are in which generation of personal disciples of the War God?” Linley asked.

“Me? I’m the 22nd personal disciple.” Castro laughed.

“You’ve reached the peak-stage of the Saint level by now, right?” Linley asked. When he was at the courtyard, he had heard the honorary disciples say that Castro should be on par with him. This was why Linley asked this question.

Castro nodded. “Right. But I most likely am not a match for you. Your speed is quite astonishing, on par with Olivier.”

Linley was thinking nonstop.

Even the 22nd personal disciple had reached the peak-stage of the Saint level. Then what about the earlier disciples?

“Castro, the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, is reputed to be the number one Saint in the world. Has he ever competed against your senior apprentice-brother?” Linley asked.

“No way.”

Castro let out an involuntary chuckle. “Although Haydson already has a rather high grasp and understanding of the Laws of the Earth, the War God’s College has quite a few people more powerful than him. The reason why Haydson is famous is because my senior apprentice-brother and second apprentice-brother are all over five thousand years old, and have retreated from the secular world thousands of years ago. How could they go out and compete against a junior who is only a few centuries old for the sake of fame and glory?”

Linley suddenly understood.

“Even aside from our War God’s College, I know others more powerful than him as well. For example, that King of Killers, Cesar. A thousand years ago, Cesar sparred against my senior apprentice-brother, and they were both on par with each other. I imagine if Cesar wanted to act against Haydson, he would be able to easily gain victory,” Castro said with certainty.

Linley was startled.

Cesar?

It seemed as though Castro didn’t know that Cesar had already reached the Deity level. But for his senior apprentice-brother to have dueled Cesar to a standstill a thousand years ago meant that he was indeed an incredible person.

“We’ve arrived at Bluethunder Peak. Come. It’s been a long time since I’ve seen my senior apprentice-brother as well. Master has always said that amongst all of us disciples, senior apprentice-brother is the most likely to reach the Deity level.” Castro’s face was filled with confidence.

The Eldest Disciple

The mountain wind howled drearily. Walking up the mountain, Linley and Castro travelled a hundred meters with every two or three steps.

“On Bluethunder Peak, eight of us apprentice-brothers are living there. Our senior apprentice-brother is also living at the very top of Bluethunder Peak,” Castro said with emotion.

But Linley was currently thinking about that battle the eldest disciple had with Cesar a thousand years ago.”

“Castro, do you know anything about that duel between your senior apprentice-brother and Cesar?” Linley asked.

Castro said enviously, “When that duel occurred, I hadn’t been accepted into the War God’s College yet. I have, however, heard other fellow apprentices discuss it. That Cesar was extremely powerful, and he was extremely fast as well. Senior apprentice-brother’s speed is the highest amongst all of us, but he was only able to match Cesar’s speed.”

“How fast were they?” Linley was also specialized in speed.

Castro laughed calmly. “I don’t know either. After all, I didn’t personally witness this duel. But I think... they should be much faster than you and Olivier.”

Linley could understand. After all, his human form was not yet at the Saint level. He still had a long way to grow. It was normal if he currently wasn’t a match for them.

At the top of Bluethunder Peak.

The top of the mountain had an open space that was a few dozen meters wide. There were some stunted dwarf trees at the top of the mountain as well as some wild grass. Next to one of the old dwarf trees, there were two stone houses.

And at the top of the mountain, there was a man standing there, staring downwards.

Linley carefully looked at this man. He was dressed in a simple blue robe. He was rather skinny, but his back was ramrod straight. His short hair was only three inches, and it was also blue. Just by looking at him, one could sense that this man was possessed of a valiant, resolute air.

“Senior apprentice-brother,” Castro called out respectfully.

The blue-haired man turned to look at them. When his gaze landed on Linley, Linley suddenly sensed his own soul seem to tremble from the gaze.

Was this an attack?!

Linley instantly grew frightened. He was certain that against ordinary warriors, most likely the gaze alone of this senior apprentice-brother could destroy their soul. Fortunately, he himself possessed the spiritual energy of an Arch Magus of the ninth rank.

“Not bad.” The man smiled and nodded. “You are Linley?”

“I am.” Linley nodded as well.

“My name is Fain.” The man smiled. “Master instructed me to come welcome you. You drank dragon’s blood in order to gain the ability to transform, I believe. You aren’t a pure Dragonblood Warrior, right?”

“Hrm?” Linley frowned.

“After hearing about your Dragonform’s appearance, I deduced this. I’ve met other Dragonblood Warriors of your Baruch clan,” Fain said with a calm laugh.

“So what if I did drink dragon’s blood?” Linley responded.

The eldest disciple, Fain, sighed with emotion. “Based on what I know, the Pure Dragonblood Warriors have tremendous potential, while the Variant Dragonblood Warriors who drank dragon’s blood have slightly less potential. If you were a Pure Dragonblood Warrior, upon reaching the peak of your power, you would probably be able to do battle with me.”

“Even the potential of a Variant Dragonblood Warrior most likely is greater than yours.” Linley was very unhappy with the way this ‘eldest disciple’ was

speaking.

Fain frowned.

He was a person of great status. Even the so-called 'most powerful Saint' in the world, the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, was nothing more than a junior in Fain's eyes, not even worthy of his attention. He truly was rather dissatisfied with the way Linley had just spoken to him.

But when he thought of the instructions the War God had given him, Fain simply smiled, no longer allowing himself to be angry.

"Indeed. Supreme Warriors, even non-pure ones, still have higher potential than normal people." Fain smiled, then glanced at the nearby Castro. "Apprentice-brother, you can go back now. For now, I will attend to Linley."

"Yes, senior apprentice-brother," Castro said very respectfully. He then looked at Linley meaningfully, signaling with his eyes for Linley to not be too arrogant. He then left the mountain.

Linley took a deep breath. He, too, understood that here at the War God's College, it was best to be a bit more humble.

"Linley, let's sit down and chat." With a wave of his hand, Fain caused two nearby wooden seats to fly over towards them, landing in front of himself and Linley.

Seeing this, Linley was extremely puzzled.

What technique had Fain used just now? Linley hadn't sensed him using any battle-qi.

"I hear that you refused Lord Hodan?" Fain laughed. Even Fain was extremely respectful towards Hodan. Hodan was, after all, a Deity-level expert.

"Indeed." Linley nodded.

"Wise." Fain laughed. "Linley, we should feel very lucky to have been born here in the Yulan continent."

"Oh?" Linley was somewhat confused.

Fain continued, "Many Saints have already been famous for centuries and

have enjoyed all there is to enjoy. Most of their family members have died of old age. Without anything tying them down emotionally, a large number of them have gone to the Higher Planes.”

Linley nodded. He understood this.

Eventually, one would grow weary of what the material plane had to offer. After the passage of centuries, all family members who had not reached the Saint level would have died long ago. It was very normal for them to eventually decide to go to the Higher Planes.

“But what those people do not understand is that many of the experts of the Higher Planes wish they could come here to the plane of the Yulan continent.” A hint of a smile was at the corner of Fain’s lips. “Linley, five thousand years ago, many experts from different planes descended to the Yulan continent. Do you know of this affair?”

“I’ve heard of it.” Linley nodded.

“I didn’t expect you to know about this.” Fain nodded. “Those countless experts all came to the Yulan continent. Naturally, it was because there was something about this plane that attracted them.”

Fain shook his head and sighed. “But many Saints instead choose to run off to the Higher Planes, where experts are as common as the clouds. They give up what is close to them for something far away.”

“Linley, let me just tell you this. Don’t be in a hurry to go to the Higher Planes. Stay here. Eventually, you’ll know what huge benefits this plane has to offer. As for what secrets lie hidden within the Yulan continent, for now, I cannot tell you,” Fain said with a laugh.

Linley looked at Fain questioningly. “Why tell me this?”

Many Saints didn’t know about this. Why had Fain decided to tell him?

“Master instructed me to,” Fain said.

“The War God?” Linley truly didn’t understand it.

This was the second time the War God had assisted him. The first time, he had ordered Emperor Johann to choose Wharton, while this time, he had Fain

tell him these secrets.

Fain suddenly said, "Linley, I hear you are quite powerful. Let's spar together. What do you say?"

Linley's eyes lit up. He immediately nodded.

To train with someone on the level of Fain would definitely be beneficial. With a flip of his hand, Linley retrieved his Bloodviolet flexible sword. Leaping backwards, he retreated at high speed, while at the same time, those black scales covered his body, and those sharp, ferocious spikes appeared as well.

Staring at Linley's cold, remorseless dark golden eyes, Fain sighed in praise. "This Variant Dragonform of yours seems to be quite special. Come. Are you ready?"

Linley was already chanting the words to the Windshadow spell.

"Ready." Linley nodded.

Looking at Linley, Fain recalled his master's instructions. He couldn't help but let out a resigned sigh. The reason he actively asked Linley to spar was also at the behest of the War God.

According to the War God, it was time to let Linley have an idea as to how powerful the true experts of the continent were.

"Linley, I am extremely fast. Be careful," Fain said with a smile. In fact, Linley had chosen to use Bloodviolet precisely because he had heard that Fain was fast.

Bloodviolet could reach an astonishing level of speed when used correctly.

"Let's begin." Fain's eyes lit up.

"Swish!" An azure light suddenly flowed out from Fain's body, so powerful that it crackled and popped.

Fain suddenly moved.

Linley only felt an azure bolt of lightning suddenly streak towards him, at least twice as fast as Olivier's top speed. This terrifying speed rendered Linley completely unable to dodge.

“How frightening!”

Linley leapt backwards while hurriedly transforming Bloodviolet into a tornado of movement, creating countless flashes of violet light that attacked that azure bolt of lightning.

Profound Truths of the Wind – Rippling Wind!

Linley didn't dare to use any other techniques. If he were to use the 'Tempos of the Wind' instead, he probably wouldn't even be able to touch his opponent. Only by using this extremely fast technique could he just barely defend himself.

“Bam!” A terrifying force struck onto the tip of Bloodviolet.

And then, Linley could clearly sense that azure bolt of lightning seem to be transmitted through Bloodviolet towards him, striking onto his black scales.

“Bang!”

It was as though a heavy warhammer had struck Linley's soul. Linley flew upwards, then immediately collapsed onto the floor, his entire body trembling as that azure lightning continued to ripple across Linley's body.

His entire body felt paralyzed. Linley could sense that his muscles had lost all power, and he was barely able to remain conscious.

After a long period of time, Linley finally regained full consciousness, and his four limbs and his muscles slowly gained strength as well. Only now did Linley stand up, staring at Fain with disbelief.

When he had dueled with Olivier, Linley had believed himself to be a peak-stage Saint, which meant that there should be very few people in the continent capable of defeating him.

But now, after sparring with Fain, he realized that the difference between himself and Fain was extremely vast.

Fain was twice as fast as him. Although that didn't sound like much, when engaging in a battle of speed, even a tiny advantage in speed meant the faster party held an advantage. Twice as fast... this was an unbridgeable gap.

There was no way for him to counterattack.

What's more, that lightning-attack had stunned his very soul. Fain had actually held back from using his full power as he had not wished to injure Linley.

"What, you can't believe it?" Fain sat back down on his wooden chair, laughing.

Linley's mind was in a state of chaos. "Although I knew that you are strong, Mr. Fain, I didn't expect... I couldn't resist at all. Mr. Fain, have you reached the Deity level?"

"No. I'm still just a peak-stage Saint." Fain shook his head.

"I'm also a peak-stage Saint. But..." Linley couldn't understand.

Laughing, Fain looked at Linley, then sighed with emotion. "Linley, don't be fooled by the four words, 'peak-stage Saint-level'. In the eyes of experts such as us, the so-called 'peak-stage' doesn't matter. The only thing that matters is how much and how well you understand the Laws."

"If you understand just the tiniest bit of the Laws, then you are a 'peak-stage' Saint in the eyes of ordinary people," Fain said disdainfully.

Linley was startled.

Right. That was indeed the case. When Linley's proficiency with the sword had reached the 'impose' level, that was merely borrowing the 'imposing force' of the heavens and the earth. It didn't have anything to do with the Laws.

But the techniques he had developed based on the Profound Truths of the Earth and the two techniques he had developed based on the Profound Truths of the Wind, the Rippling Wind and Tempos of the Wind techniques, were indeed based on what he himself knew was but a tiny bit of understanding of the Laws.

"According to what Master says, the Elemental Laws are as vast and boundless as the seas. If you've understood a single drop of water in those seas, you are a peak-stage Saint. If you've understood a hundred drops of water, you are still a peak-stage Saint. But there is a huge difference between the two!"

A hint of loneliness could be seen on Fain's face. "The Elemental Laws truly

are vast and boundless. Supposedly, only after mastering 1% of a Law can one reach the Demigod stage.”

“As for you and Olivier, you haven’t even mastered 0.01%.” Fain laughed as he glanced at Linley. “Tell me. Although both of you have gained some insights, can your insights compare with the likes of those of us who have been training for thousands of years?”

Linley understood.

No matter how much of a genius he was, he had spent less than ten years meditating on the Elemental Laws.

And Fain? He had been doing the same for thousands of years. Even if Fain wasn’t as talented as him, how could his understanding of the Laws be lower than Linley’s?

“Linley, most of the famous Saints in the world, such as that ‘Monolithic Sword Saint’ Haydson, all became famous in the past millennium. Those true experts who have been training for thousands of years are all far past the point of caring about worldly fame. All of them are meditating and training in private.”

Linley was stunned.

The Monolithic Sword Saint had the reputation of being the most powerful Saint, after all.

“Those lists and rankings that you might have heard about are nothing more than the experts that most people of the continent know about. Do you know how powerful the experts you are unaware of are? All of the lucky survivors of those battles from five thousand years ago have been in training in secret since then. I refuse to believe that they would be willing to leave the plane of the Yulan continent.” A hint of a smile was on Fain’s face.

The War God's Summons

After saying these words, Fain turned and walked to the edge of the peak, allowing the wind to buffet his long robes. As for Linley, he continued to sit there, digesting what he had just learned.

From the Planar Overseer, Hodan, Linley had learned that upon reaching the Saint level, one could leave the plane of the Yulan continent.

From Fain, Linley had learned that the Yulan continent's plane contained a major secret. The descent of those experts from other planes five thousand years ago was also related to this mystery.

Actually, it was already quite incredible that Linley had reached his current level at the tender age of twenty-seven. After all, those extremely powerful experts who were training in secret here in the Yulan continent had all been training for countless years.

"Whew." Linley let out a long breath.

"Why worry about so much? As long as my little brother and I are happy, and as long as I can exterminate the Radiant Church to avenge my parents, I should feel satisfied."

Linley's current goals required that he reach a certain level of power.

As for Linley himself, he truly enjoyed the path of training.

The path of training was filled with obstacles, treacherous cliffs, and dangers. Many powerful people had lost their lives on this path. How few would actually reach the pinnacle?

In the entire Yulan continent, there were only six Deities.

Ever since embarking on this path, Linley's goal was to stand at the very pinnacle of the Yulan continent. When he had embarked on this path as a youth, Linley had mentally prepared himself for the possibility of death and

failure.

“When I was six, because I was unable to train in Dragonblood battle-qi, my dream was to become a warrior of the seventh or eighth ranks. Afterwards, I not only became a Dragonblood Warrior, I also became the genius magus of the Holy Union.”

“When I was young, I dreamed of eventually reaching the Saint level. And now, I have become a peak-stage Saint.”

A hint of a smile was on Linley’s lips.

He had confidence.

“Fain? In the not-too-distant future, I will defeat him as well.” Linley felt full of excitement. The more experts he surpassed and the greater the heights he achieved, the more satisfied he felt.

What truly moved a person wasn’t the results he gained, but the overcoming of setbacks and breakthroughs that one made on the path to success.

Fain turned his head, looking at Linley.

“Rest here for now. At nightfall, I will take you to see Master.” Fain smiled.

“The War God?” Linley frowned.

The War God wanted to personally meet with him?

“Naturally, Master has something he wishes to discuss with you. Just train here quietly for now. If there is anything you need, you can ask me.” Fain didn’t want to waste any more time on Linley. He walked to a stone that had already been polished smooth by him sitting on it countless times. Seating himself in the meditative stance, he closed his eyes.

Linley stared at the meditating Fain.

“What exactly does the War God want?” Linley didn’t think about it for too long, as he also sat down and began to quietly meditate.



Time passed. In the blink of an eye, the sun had set.

Fain had been quietly meditating on the boulder. Suddenly, his body began to turn blurry, then disappeared from atop the boulder and reappeared next to it.

Seeing that Linley had been quietly meditating this entire time, Fain couldn't help but secretly nod.

True experts had to learn how to endure solitude.

For example, Olivier had quietly meditated by himself atop that desolate mountain for three full years. Linley, in turn, had spent three painstaking years training in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. If one couldn't endure solitude, one's level of talent wouldn't make a difference.

"Linley, it is about time. Come with me to meet Master." Fain smiled.

Linley opened his eyes as well, and immediately followed Fain.

Fain walked to the side of the peak, and then began to fly downwards. Although Linley wasn't able to fly in human form, Linley leapt off the peak as well, allowing himself to gracefully drift downwards.

Based on his mastery of the wind, Linley could slow down the rate of his descent.

Soon, Fain landed at the half-way point down the mountain, and Linley landed as well.

"Come in with me." Fain headed straight for a natural tunnel. Linley felt rather puzzled. The War God actually lived in a tunnel?

The tunnel curved left and right. After a long time, it ended in that deep, bottomless pit. Looking down into it, nothing but darkness could be seen.

"Let's go down." Fain jumped down directly, and Linley followed him.

"Whoosh." "Whoosh."

The two fell down at high speed. Linley was secretly shocked. "We've definitely fallen for at least two thousand meters. We're below the ground level by now."

After falling for a long period of time, Fain and Linley gracefully floated to the

ground.

And then, Linley followed Fain as they continued to move through the tunnel, but as they did, the tunnel's temperature grew higher and higher.

"What a high temperature."

Even Linley didn't dare to resist this terrifying heat with his body alone. He had to use his battle-qi to protect the soles of his feet, and even his skin and head was covered by a layer of azurish-black battle-qi.

Without the protection of his battle-qi, most likely Linley would have caught on fire.

The surrounding stone walls were all red with heat. After walking for a while, Linley saw a pitch-black stone door in front of him. Despite the extremely high temperature, the stone door hadn't turned even the slightest bit red. Clearly, it was made from no ordinary material.

"Whoooooosh."

Gusts of hot air came from the other side of the door, carrying with it a faint, majestic presence. Faced with this majestic presence, Linley actually felt the sudden urge to bow down towards it.

"Master, I've brought Linley," Fain said respectfully.

The War God?

The War God was past this door!

Linley had previously been calm, but now, his heart couldn't help but begin to beat faster. He was actually standing in front of one of the six ultimate experts of the Yulan continent, with only a stone door separating them.

"Alright. Fain. You can leave now," a calm voice rang out.

"Yes, Master." Fain respectfully departed.

Linley still stood there, quietly waiting for the War God to address him.

"Linley. Twenty-seven years old. An Arch Magus of the ninth rank who has already embarked on the path of understanding the Laws..." The War God's voice remained very calm. "Linley, you aren't bad."

Linley frowned.

He could sense that the War God's voice seemed to be causing his soul to shudder. He had the sense that if the War God was to raise his voice a little bit, it would cause his soul to dissipate and collapse.

"Thank you for your praise, War God," Linley said humbly.

"I have already instructed Fain to tell you that which you need to know. Outside the door, there is a scarlet talisman of command. Take it. From today forward, you can be considered to be someone belonging to my side," the War God said calmly.

Linley's heart shook.

Considered to be someone belonging to the War God's side?

He turned to look at the side of the door. Indeed, atop a flat rock, there was a scarlet red talisman, which slowly rose into the air and began to fly towards Linley.

Atop the talisman, a single engraved word could be seen: "War"!

"What is this War God thinking? I'll be considered as belonging to his side?" Linley felt somewhat unhappy. The War God was forcibly recruiting him without even asking or negotiating with him.

The War God's calm voice once more rang out, "Given your current level of power, you actually aren't yet qualified to receive this talisman. However... I believe you will reach that level sooner or later, which is why I am giving it to you in advance. Once you have this talisman, you will be qualified to investigate the secrets of the Yulan continent."

"The secrets of the Yulan continent?" Linley said.

"When your human form reaches the Saint level, or... when you defeat the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, come find me again. By then, you will be qualified to know this secret. Only then would you truly be worthy of this talisman," the War God said calmly.

From the War God's words, Linley could sense a certain lonely arrogance.

In the War God's eyes, the current Linley wasn't even qualified to possess this

talisman. In his eyes, Linley's power was indeed quite weak.

Linley knew his own limits as well.

"War God," Linley said respectfully. "You just said when my human form reaches the Saint level, or when I defeat the Monolithic Sword Saint? Does that mean you, War God, feel that only after my human form reaches the Saint level will I be able to defeat the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson?"

The War God was momentarily silent.

"That Monolithic Sword Saint is reputed to be the world's strongest Saint. Although in the eyes of those other peak-stage Saints who lie hidden throughout the world, he doesn't live up to that reputation, Haydson's current level of power can still be considered on par with those who have trained for thousands of years."

Linley understood.

"As for reaching the Saint level in your human form... if you remain unable to defeat Haydson even after your human form reaches the Saint level, then I will feel embarrassed on your ancestors' behalf," the War God said calmly.

Linley laughed.

Clearly, as far as the War God was concerned, once Linley's human form reached the Saint level, Linley should definitely have surpassed Haydson. But the War God seemed to currently feel that he was not yet able to overcome Haydson.

"I refuse to believe that the War God knows about the true offensive power of my 'Profound Truths of the Earth,'" Linley said to himself.

Although the War God possessed divine power, he wasn't omniscient.

"Linley, let me offer you a word of advice!" the War God suddenly said.

"War God, please speak." Linley's eyes lit up, and he immediately listened carefully. The War God had become a Deity over five thousand years ago. His advice could allow Linley to avoid many missteps.

That calm voice rang out from behind the stone door. "The Elemental Laws contain all sorts of truths. What you need to do is select a single path and follow

it to its conclusion. It is best if you don't simultaneously train in multiple paths."

Linley was startled. The Elemental Laws were indeed quite boundless. For example, Linley was currently analyzing two aspects of the Elemental Laws of Wind. The first one was speed, the ultimate speed.

The second was in single-target sword attacks, such as his Tempos of the Wind.

"War God, why should I select just one path?" Linley asked.

"Naturally, if you so desire, you can simultaneously analyze multiple aspects of the Elemental Laws. No one can force you not to do so. Whether or not you choose to take my advice is up to you. Alright, I am finished. You can leave now," the War God said calmly.

Linley hurriedly said, "War God, I would like to ask, what sort of power or authority does this talisman confer upon me?"

"Possessing this talisman is a symbol that you are qualified to enter the ranks of those who know the secrets of the Yulan continent. As for everything else... even if you die, I won't get involved. You must rely on yourself."

"Then War God, I would like to ask, right now, how many Deities exist on the Yulan continent?" Ever since meeting Fain, Linley had been wondering...

Was it possible that the Yulan continent had more than just five Deities?

"In total, there are five," the War God said calmly. "That Cesar broke through just a few years ago."

Linley felt secretly relieved.

The Yulan continent only had a few Deities standing at its peak after all.

"War God, why did you give me this talisman? Previously, why did you help my younger brother?" Linley asked. Linley had been puzzled about this the entire time. What sort of relationship did the War God have with him?

As far as Linley could tell, the War God shouldn't need anything from him.

After all, the War God was far, far more powerful than him.

"You ask too many questions."

The War God's voice turned cold. "You can go back now. For now, don't think about too many things. Focus on your training. After you defeat Haydson, or after your human form reaches the Saint level, come find me again."

Hearing that the War God was starting to grow annoyed, Linley knew how he should act.

"War God, I bid you farewell then."

Linley immediately left. Casting the Windshadow spell, Linley flew out of the deep pit, then exited the tunnel. After exiting the tunnel and allowing the mountain wind to buffet him, Linley let out a long breath.

Despite being separated from the War God by a stone door, Linley still felt enormous pressure when speaking to the man.

"Someone belonging to his side?" Linley stared at the scarlet talisman in his hand. The scarlet talisman occasionally flashed with golden light. Linley had never seen this sort of material before.

With a flip of his hand, Linley stored the scarlet talisman into his interspatial ring, then headed down War God Mountain.

On the way down, Linley was still thinking about the War God's final bit of advice.

"The Elemental Laws contain all sorts of truths. What you need to do is select a single path and follow it to its conclusion."

His current focus was the throbbing pulse of the world.

Linley shook his head. Without thinking about it any longer, he left War God Mountain and returned to the imperial capital.

The next time Linley would return to War God Mountain, it would be after he defeated Haydson, or when his human form reached the Saint level.

Pulseguard

Count Wharton's manor was very quiet. Zassler was in his room training, while Barker, his brothers, and Wharton were all training in the wide training yard in the back of the manor. Rebecca, Leena, and Jenne were chatting with the Seventh Princess, Nina.

"Whew."

After finishing his training, Wharton took a shower and changed into a set of clean clothes. Satisfied and content, Wharton walked into his manor. He had never felt as happy as he currently felt.

He was together with his Big Brother, and he was marrying Nina. Grandpa Hiri and Hillman were also enjoying the quiet, comfortable lives of nobles.

"Father. Mother. If you two were still alive, you would definitely be very happy." Wharton felt very satisfied, while at the same time, he felt very grateful to his Big Brother, Linley, who had brought all of this.

Linley was the pillar of the clan.

If it wasn't for Linley, would the Emperor have given Nina to him? If it wasn't for Linley, in the capital, he would only be an ordinary person amongst the nobles, at best considered a genius.

Wharton glanced at the distant Grandpa Hiri, who was reclining on a chair, idly sipping some fruit juice.

"Grandpa Hiri, where's my Big Brother?" Wharton asked as he walked over.

Housekeeper Hiri looked up and smiled. "Oh, Wharton. Young master Linley left early in the morning."

"He still isn't back yet?" Wharton nodded.

"You have nothing to be worried about. Your Big Brother is a Saint. Young

master Wharton, you need to train hard as well.” Housekeeper Hiri chortled.

“Right.” Wharton nodded.

“Grandpa Hiri, next month is Olivier’s duel against the Monolithic Sword Saint. Will you go watch?” Wharton laughed.

“Naturally. How could I miss a duel between two Saints?” Housekeeper Hiri’s eyes shone. “The Monolithic Sword Saint is an expert amongst Saints. This duel will definitely be exciting.”

Wharton’s eyes were also filled with excitement.

“One day, I will be like my Big Brother, Olivier, and Haydson.” Wharton secretly decided.

Just then, footsteps rang out.

Linley appeared outside the courtyard. Seeing his Big Brother, Wharton felt a warm feeling in his heart. He hurriedly went to welcome him. “Big Bro, what took you so long to come back? Barker and I have finished our training. We are going to eat dinner soon.”

“I went to see some people.” Linley laughed.

Linley didn’t tell his little brother about his trip to War God Mountain. As Linley saw it, it was best not to inform his little brother about certain affairs of the Yulan continent. When his little brother reached the Saint level, there would be plenty of time to tell him then.

Within the rear of the courtyard was Linley’s residence within the manor estate. The training grounds of the estate were extremely large, but Wharton, Barker, and his brothers all needed a great deal of space as well. Thus, Linley usually trained by himself in his own manor.

“Whoosh.” “Whoosh.” The wind blew about, scattering the fallen leaves on the floor, sending them dancing into the air. Linley’s hair gently fluttered about with the wind as well.

Linley was wielding the adamantine heavy sword, with the tip of the sword touching the ground.

“I have already managed to generate 128 pulses of the vibrational attacks of

the Profound Truths of the Earth.” During the five years he had spent at Cloudpeaks Village, Linley had already mastered the Hundred Layered Waves during the fourth year.

Linley had improved quite rapidly when he had advanced from three waves to ten, then from ten to a hundred.

But after a hundred waves had been reached, Linley’s rate of improvement had begun to drop. Despite all that time having passed, Linley had only reached 128 waves.

With each breakthrough, Linley only managed to increase the number of waves by one or two.

“I wonder what the absolute limit is for the number of waves?” Linley sat down into the meditative position.

“Thruuum.” “Thruuum.”

The sound of the throbbing pulse of the world rang out within Linley’s consciousness. That unique rhythm had a miraculous cadence, capable of causing someone to unconsciously be subsumed within it.

Linley’s muscles would occasionally expand or contract as they constantly vibrated, and wind arose out of nowhere around Linley. While meditating, Linley had previously noticed that his muscles would absorb earth elemental essence at an even faster pace when they were vibrating in pace with the rhythm of the earth’s pulse, allowing his body to gain strength faster.

“Ah!”

Linley suddenly stood up, his eyes shining with terrifying light.

“The throbbing pulse of the world. The throbbing pulse of the world...” Linley had suddenly recalled that technique the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, had used to block himself and Olivier.

Haydson’s body had suddenly been surrounded by layered waves of earth-colored elemental particles which had hammered against him in waves, forcing him backwards.

“Back then, I had the feeling that Haydson’s defense seemed to have a very

familiar quality about it. But at the time, I didn't understand it, and I didn't have time to analyze it. But now..."

Linley had a particular feeling, akin to seeing a bright moon that had been hidden behind a foggy veil gradually growing clearer in his mind.

"The throbbing pulse of the world isn't just vibrational waves. It can also become invisible, and it can also be transmitted through battle-qi." It was as though there had been an opaque film covering this realization. Having pierced through the film, Linley now began to understand.

"Using pulses for defense, haha... earth magic has the 'Pulsating Guard' forbidden level spell. It seems that they are based on the same principles. However, my 'Pulseguard Defense' would only be used to protect myself."

Linley's azurish-black battle-qi began to fill the area around him.

"No, that isn't how it works."

Linley shut his eyes, allowing his heart to merge with the throbbing pulse of the world, while also tuning his Dragonblood battle-qi to the same tempo. He already understood the general principles, but actually applying them wasn't a simple task.

Linley stood there in the middle of the courtyard as waves of azurish-black battle-qi suffused the area around him.

The principle was actually quite simple. For example, a sheet of paper could easily be torn apart, but if the paper was folded six times into a braid, this braid of paper might be able to support up to a hundred pounds of force.

The same material, after being folded and braided, could support far more amounts of force.

Battle-qi was the same when used for defense.

The same battle-qi, when used in different ways, could defend against ten times or even a hundred times as much incoming force. The "Throbbing Pulse of the World", in turn, was a very unique technique.

The Throbbing Pulse of the World was just one of the paths within the Laws of the Earth.

Linley had already reached a rather high level of understanding with regards to the Throbbing Pulse of the World. All he had to do now was to transform that understanding and use the same principles to create a Pulseguard Defense for himself. Since he already understood the principles, once he began to apply them, he would advance fairly quickly.

“Big Bro, time to eat.” Wharton walked over, with Barker and his brothers behind him. The five of them had just finished training and then showering.

But when they pushed the door open, they discovered...

Linley was surrounded by azurish-black battle-qi, which rolled out like waves of fog. Linley was hidden within those roiling waves of azurish-black battle-qi.

“Big Bro?”

“Lord?”

Wharton, Barker, and the others all looked at each other. Although training was important, resting was as well.

“Don’t bother the Boss,” Bebe, resting in the corner of the courtyard, ordered.

“It is dinner time. Big Bro should take a rest.” As he spoke, Wharton headed towards Linley. Bebe and Haeru glanced at each other, but didn’t block him.

Linley had already instructed Bebe and Haeru not to go near him, as they would otherwise be injured by those waves.

“Time to let this little punk learn a lesson,” Bebe secretly said to himself.

Wharton remained cautious. The battle-qi around Linley was quite dense, but he was still fairly far away from Linley. The battle-qi here was still rather sparse. How could Wharton be truly worried about such a small amount of battle-qi?

But once he reached the edges of that azurish-black battle-qi, Wharton suddenly felt a bizarre surge of energy strike at him.

“Bang!”

Wharton was sent flying away. Wharton had the sensation of being struck dozens of times in an instant, and each time he felt as though he had been

struck by a meteor.

“Wharton.” Gates was the first to go forward and catch Wharton.

“Wharton, are you okay?” Gates asked.

“I’m fine.” Wharton put his hand against his chest, the taste of blood in his mouth. He stared at Linley in disbelief. “Big Bro is releasing his battle-qi, but I only touched the outermost perimeter. How could the power be so intense?”

Wharton didn’t believe it. The battle-qi density closer to Linley was far higher, and it would most likely be far more dangerous as well.

“Wharton, his Lordship still hasn’t stopped his training despite what just happened. Clearly, he must be at a critical juncture in his training. It’s best if we don’t disturb him,” Barker said seriously.

Wharton nodded as well. “I will order the guards to prevent anyone from disturbing him.”

“No need. Haeru and I will look after him,” Bebe said disdainfully. “You can leave now. If the Boss doesn’t finish his training, don’t disturb him.”

Wharton, Barker, and the others glanced at each other, then left.

At the same time, Wharton and Barker instructed everyone else not to interrupt Linley’s training. That night, at dinner, Jenne, Nina, and the others were all astonished at how hard Linley was training.

“He’s training so hard that he won’t even eat dinner. Big lunk, your Big Bro really is hard working.” Nina murmured.

But unexpectedly, the second day, Linley continued to train like this. The third day, the same... and just like that, one day after another went by.

In the blink of an eye, over ten days passed. May had arrived.

“In a few more days, it will be time for the duel between Olivier and Haydson. My Big Bro wouldn’t be so caught up in his training that he will miss it, would he?” Wharton said to Barker and his brothers.

Wharton, Barker, and his brothers were all standing at the doorway to the courtyard.

Every day, after they finished their training, they would come visit Linley. Linley hadn't changed at all, and he was still surrounded by that azurish-black battle-qi. Only, compared to ten days past, that azurish-black battle-qi had actually shrunk quite a bit in area.

"I wonder how Big Brother's training is progressing." Wharton simply couldn't understand what he was seeing.

Barker and his brothers shook their heads as well. In terms of level of understanding, Barker and his brothers weren't much better off than Wharton, and weren't able to understand much of anything regarding the Elemental Laws.

"Whew." The sound of an exhaling breath.

Wharton and the Barker brothers, who had just turned and prepared to leave, all turned and looked back. Indeed, the azurish-black battle-qi had returned to Linley's body, and Linley was currently smiling while stretching.

"Wharton, you are here as well." Linley laughed.

"Big Bro, you finally finished your training," Wharton said with excitement.

"Oh, right. Wharton, how much time have I spent in training?" Linley laughed.

"Almost fifteen days! Today is May 1st. In three days, it will be May 4th. That night, Olivier and Haydson will be dueling," Wharton said quickly.

"Fifteen days?"

Linley was slightly startled. Actually, he had been completely concentrating on sensing the 'Throbbing Pulse of the World' and constantly modifying and upgrading his Pulseguard Defense technique. He hadn't noticed time pass at all.

Unexpectedly, after closing his eyes, fifteen days had passed.

"Although I already had a high understanding of the 'Throbbing Pulse of the World' and also understood the general principles behind the Pulseguard, the actual development of the technique took fifteen days."

But Linley was actually quite satisfied.

In the past, his 'battle-qi armor' was created through the application of battle-

qi in a very simple, crude manner. His current 'Pulseguard Defense' used the same amount of battle-qi, but was several dozen times stronger.

"But it seems my defense is different from Haydson's."

When he was developing his technique, Linley had thought their techniques were the same. But after developing it, Linley realized... that Haydson's defense was actually just a simple way of utilizing the 'Throbbing Pulse of the World'. Haydson's understanding of the Throbbing Pulse of the World definitely was not as deep as Linley's own level of understanding.

However, Haydon's defense was still frightfully powerful.

This was because the 'Throbbing Pulse of the World' was just a supportive part of Haydson's defense. His true power most likely lay in a different mystery of the Laws of the Earth.

"I wonder how my pure 'Pulseguard Defense' technique matches up against Haydson's defense," Linley secretly wondered to himself.

"Big Bro, what are you thinking about? Let's go eat dinner," Wharton called out.

"Alright."

Linley turned to look at Bebe and Haeru. "Bebe, Haeru, let's go." Linley could guess that Bebe and Haeru hadn't left his side during these past fifteen days.

"And here I was thinking that the Boss had forgotten about us." Bebe hopped onto Linley's shoulders, then pursed his lips. "But Boss, I've gotta say, although we haven't left the courtyard a single time during these past ten or so days, those servants still delivered food to us every day. Alas, but tonight, nobody will deliver food. I, Bebe, will have to personally go get something to eat."

Linley, Wharton, and Barker and his brothers all couldn't help but laugh.

Olivier vs Haydson

Yulan calendar, year 10009. May 4th. This night was guaranteed to be anything but an ordinary night. Many of the people of the imperial capital were unable to sleep, and instead came to the outskirts of the city. Tonight, there were no stars in the sky, nor was there a bright moon. Instead, a thick layer of clouds covered the skies.

Many citizens of the imperial capital had come with lit lanterns. In groups of three and five, they awaited the arrival of this battle.

“Hey, third brother. Where do you think Lord Olivier and Lord Haydson will hold their duel? Back then, when Lord Olivier challenged Lord Haydson, he didn’t clearly specify where they would fight. Only, that they would fight outside the city. But would it be outside the east gate or the west gate, or the south gate, or the north gate?”

“Who knows? We have no choice but to quietly wait.”

This question nagged at many people. Many people had even arrived from different cities. Aside from a small number of people who were indifferent, and a number of magi, many people came. Nearly half the population of the city had come to watch this duel. When the tourists from other cities were added to their number, there were definitely millions of people here today.

People were clustered outside all four of the gates of the imperial city.

Nobody knew where the duel would take place.

A large group of people from Count Wharton’s residence had gone as well, naturally. But Linley’s group was able to easily tell where the duel was going to occur. This was because... the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, was intentionally broadcasting his aura.

The Monolithic Sword Saint and Olivier had not clearly discussed where the

duel would occur.

Thus, Haydson, the Monolithic Sword Saint, had chosen to head to the Channe River, located north of the imperial capital. He stood in the air above the river, which was a wide one, measuring several hundred meters across at its widest. However, in terms of length, it could not compare to the Yulan River, and the Channe River actually joined the Yulan River at its end.

Saints were extremely sensitive to the auras of others.

If a Saint-level battle were to occur at a specific location, Saints from hundreds of kilometers away would sense it. Linley didn't transform, because Haeru and Bebe could both clearly sense Haydson's aura.

"Above Channe River, north of the city. Let's go now. The duel will occur there. Lord Haydson is there." This information swept the city like a storm, quickly spreading to the people in the south, east, and west sides of the city.

The millions of people congregating in those places swept towards the north like a flood.

The vast majority of these people went cross country towards the north. After all, there were far too many people here. If they all went by the streets of the capital, it would simply be too congested.

"There really are quite a number of people here." Linley, Wharton, Barker and the others all stared at the local scene in shock.

Over a million people were standing on each side of Channe River. The eighty thousand spectators in the Colosseum had already seemed like a sea of people. These million plus spectators truly were a terrifying sight.

Both sides of Channe River were filled with people.

The worst part of it was...

People were continuing to arrive from the east, west, and southern sides of the city. It was as though three massive deluges of water were continually adding to an already flooded area. The population of people here only continued to grow.

"So many people. Jeeze, that Olivier... why did he have to insist on the duel

being three months later? If it had been half a month, the people from the other provinces wouldn't have been able to make it over. Three months... even people from the Northwest Administrative Province have made their way over." Hillman shook his head.

Zassler only snickered. "The more the merrier. What an awesome spectacle."

Zassler seemed to be treating this sight as a way to reminisce about the sight of his million-body-strong army of undead. His million-body undead army was also an extremely incredible sight.

"More importantly, how can we get to the front? Are we going to just watch from afar?" Seeing how tightly packed the people were in front of them, Housekeeper Hiri didn't have the courage to try and squeeze through.

Gates said delightedly, "That's easy. Let us five brothers lead the way and charge forward."

Given their massive frames, they definitely were capable of pushing to the front.

"No rush. Haven't you noticed that Emperor Johann's army has arrived?" Linley laughed. Indeed, just at this moment, the soldiers from the army had formed an orderly regiment and were marching in their direction.

There were millions of ordinary commoners here, and less than a hundred thousand soldiers.

But due to their tight formations and gleaming armor, the soldiers were able to awe and suppress the hearts of the commoners.

"Rooooaaaar!" "Groooooowl."

The millions of spectators had magical beasts in their ranks as well, some of which had been tamed by powerful experts. The cries of magical beasts could be heard as well, alongside the unceasing chatter of the humans.

It was a scene of utter chaos.

"SILENCE!"

A powerful voice rang out. "Everyone who is on a boat on Channe River, all of you, get to land, quickly! If you are on the river during Lord Haydson and Lord

Olivier's battle, it is highly likely that your boats will be swamped by waves. People on the shores of Channe River, all of you move backwards by ten meters! Nobody is permitted to go near the shores of the river. The army will maintain order here!"

The imperial army began to organize the viewers.

The upper echelons of the Empire didn't dare to be careless. If something were to happen here, with millions of citizens present, it could be disastrous. A duel between two Saints was a joyous occasion. They couldn't let it turn into a tragedy.

"Lord Wharton, Lord Linley, please come with us." Two soldiers walked over to them.

Linley and Wharton grinned at each other.

Emperor Johann had already made arrangements early on. After having those spectators retreat by ten meters, the nobles of the Empire headed to the front, although they also didn't go to the edges of the shores. With the Channe River spanning several hundred meters, there was plenty of space for the two Saints to duel.

In addition, both of the Saints were dueling in mid-air.

The nobles, based on their prearranged spots, lined up along the banks of Channe River. Having the best viewing locations, they prepared to watch this incredible spectacle. The commoners of the Empire, seeing this, actually weren't angry.

There was a huge gap between the worlds of the nobles and the commoners.

Those who were able to become nobles were all people of talent, or who had rendered great merit to the nation. As long as you had ability, you could become a noble. The commoners of the Empire actually held the nobles in great admiration, and they too wished to become nobles.

The night wind was very cold, especially close to the river banks. The cold night wind caused many nobles to put on cloaks.

On each side of the river, there were countless lit torches, illuminating the

entire Channe River. However, in the air above Channe River, the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, stood there in mid-air alone. Olivier had yet to appear.

“Master Linley, why hasn’t Olivier appeared yet?” Emperor Johann asked Linley, who was now by his side.

Emperor Johann had personally requested that Linley be seated next to him. The first reason was because he wanted to strengthen his relationship with Linley. The second was because with Linley by his side, he would be a bit safer while watching these two Saints duel.

“Don’t be impatient, your Imperial Majesty.” Linley smiled. “Haydson himself is still patiently waiting. Your Imperial Majesty, you just need to quietly wait.”

“True.” Emperor Johann smiled and nodded.

In the air above Channe River, the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson stood, dressed in his simple gray robes, and carrying that earth-colored heavy sword on his back. His eyes were shut.

Suddenly...

Haydson opened his eyes and stared to the east. A human blur was flying through the air at high speed. In the blink of an eye, a second human figure had arrived in the air above Channe River.

It was Olivier, with his Lightshadow sword and the obsidian sword on his back. Today, Olivier was dressed in a long black robe. He looked very mysterious, and his white-streaked hair was flowing freely in the breeze.

“Lord Olivier has arrived!”

The millions who had been impatiently waiting suddenly let out an explosive shout of joy, filling the heavens like a physical wave of sound, causing the waters of Channe River to vibrate. One can imagine how loud millions of joyfully shouting voices were.

“Such a large number of people is really frightening.” Wharton sighed in amazement.

Linley chuckled.

In the air above them, Olivier and Haydson hadn’t been impacted in the

slightest. They stared at each other in mid-air, with Olivier absolutely radiating an aura of battle.

“Haydson, there is no way I will hold back in our duel today. If I accidentally kill you, you can’t blame me,” Olivier said coldly.

The Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, laughed calmly as he glanced at Olivier. “If you can kill me, then kill me. I definitely won’t blame you.”

These words from these two powerful Saints excited all the spectators to the point of trembling. Good heavens, was this going to be a life-and-death duel between two powerful Saints?

This duel between two Saints was not a duel between ordinary Saints. One was reputed to be the most powerful Saint in the world, the Monolithic Sword Saint. The other was the Prodigy Sword Saint, who had come today to avenge his humiliating defeat of six years ago. This battle had filled everyone with excitement.

After countless voices called out in excitement, everyone fell silent!

Millions of people were present, but not a single person made any noise. The only thing that could be heard was the rustling of animals in the grass and the ceaseless blowing of the wind.

“Today, I have to get a good look at these two.” Linley’s eyes were as sharp as lightning, and what’s more, the surrounding wind also served as his eyes. Despite the dark night, he could clearly ‘see’ everything going on in the air between these two people who stood in mid-air several hundred meters above.

According to what the War God had said, if Linley was capable of defeating Haydson, that would mean he was qualified to know the secrets of the Yulan continent’s plane. Haydson was also a practitioner of the Laws of the Earth. Naturally, Linley would carefully observe this battle.

As for Olivier... Linley had the sense that Olivier would also be a very powerful rival.

Not just Linley.

Blumer, Kenyon, Castro, Lanke, and other personal disciples of the War God

had come over to watch this duel as well. After all, given Haydson's power, even in the War God's College, only those disciples who had trained for thousands of years were capable of defeating him.

"Six years ago, I wasn't a match for you at all. But today..." Olivier laughed coldly as he drew the pitch-black obsidian sword from his back.

"You are starting off with the obsidian sword?" Haydson smiled slightly, but then his face slowly grew solemn. He didn't move at all, nor did he draw his sword.

Olivier's face turned cold.

"Oh? Six years ago, you didn't draw your sword. Today, you still think you won't need to draw your sword in order to defeat me?" Olivier said coldly.

"If you have the ability, then force me to draw my sword," Haydson said calmly. At the same time, a rippling wave of earth-colored battle-qi surrounded Haydson, causing him to seemingly be ensconced in a wave of earth.

The two were separated by hundreds of meters of distance. Naturally, they spoke very loudly.

All the millions of spectators could clearly hear their words. They were stunned. The Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, was so arrogant that he didn't even draw his sword.

"This Haydson probably doesn't know that Olivier's obsidian sword includes a spiritual attack component alongside the physical attack." Linley didn't say anything.

For Haydson to dare act in such a way meant that he probably had reason to be confident. Linley actually didn't desire Haydson to be killed by Olivier in one stroke. That would be too laughable.

A dream-like burst of white light flashed across the sky. With each streak of white light, an additional Olivier appeared in the sky. In the blink of an eye, 108 Oliviers appeared in mid-air.

"Using a technique like this? Olivier, can it be that you don't know that these techniques are useless against me?" Haydson stood there calmly in mid-air,

ensconced by his earthen aura.

“Truly?”

Olivier laughed coldly. The strange thing was, those 108 Oliviers all moved at the same instant, charging towards the Monolithic Sword Saint at the same time.

Haydson stood there, occasionally taking a single step.

One step forward, one step back, left one step, right one step... each movement was simple, but every single step allowed him to instantly travel several dozen meters, easily dodging every single one of Olivier’s attacks.

In terms of speed, Haydson wasn’t the slightest bit slower than Olivier.

“Are you only capable of dodging?” Olivier shouted angrily.

“Even if I were to fight you head on, what would you be able to do?” Haydson’s calm voice rang out, then he returned to his original position, and then he actually retracted that earthen aura, allowing it to cling on his body.

“Whoosh!”

Those 108 Oliviers all combined into one. Olivier’s body was covered by a gloomy, cold black light that seemed to devour all the light surround him. Olivier’s face couldn’t be clearly seen.

“Hrm?” Linley was surprised.

The wind elemental essence couldn’t even get near Olivier.

“Swish!”

A ray of devouring black light tore through the sky, striking directly at Haydson. Haydson stood there without moving, just using a simple punch to strike at it with his right fist...

“Bam!” A sonic boom could be heard.

That fist smashed down with the weight of a mountain, locking the surrounding air in place.

“Boom!”

Olivier finally appeared, his obsidian sword having chopped against Haydson's fist. When Haydson had punched out, Olivier actually hadn't tried to dodge, instead clashing his sword directly against it. That terrifying force from the punch passed through the obsidian sword, and with a terrifying splintering sound, Olivier's right arm contorted bizarrely, and he was knocked flying away by the power of that fist.

As for Haydson, he simply stood there, not moving.

"Haydson... seems to be in trouble." Linley carefully watched Haydson.

The Southeast Administrative Province

Emperor Johann lay down on a bench within the imperial palace's flower gardens, feeling utterly powerless. A weak, pale look was on his face. His eyes were closed, and he was silent. The only thing the nearby palace attendant could do was to carefully take care of him. The palace attendant was very puzzled. "Just then, his Imperial Majesty was in a fine mood. But after chatting a while with Master Linley, he became like this?"

Emperor Johann's eyes suddenly opened.

"Transmit this decree. Marquis Jeff is to go to the Central Administrative Province and join with the Jacques Legion. Let Legion Commander Lace arrange a relaxed assignment for him. Unless there are special circumstances, Marquis Jeff is not to be permitted to return to the imperial capital," Emperor Johann said calmly. He truly did not wish to see Marquis Jeff again. Whenever he saw Marquis Jeff, he would be reminded of Prince Julin.

The event which occurred today was the deepest humiliation in Emperor Johann's heart. But Emperor Johann knew that there was nothing he could do about it. All he could do was accept it.

Although the palace attendant was puzzled by the Emperor's orders, he still said respectfully, "Yes, your Imperial Majesty!"

Emperor Johann sat back down on his seat. Suddenly, he seemed to have become much older.

From the imperial capital to the Southeast Administrative Province, even flying at high speed in a straight line, over two thousand kilometers had to be traversed. In mid-flight, the impatient Linley transformed into his full Dragonform, making haste towards the southeast at top speed.

When Linley had left the imperial capital, the sun had already sunk down to and reached the edges of the eastern horizon.

When Linley arrived at the provincial capital of the Southeast Administrative Province, the entire world had begun to grow dim, and the countless commoners had begun to sit down in their homes and prepare for dinner.

“Whoosh!” While flying towards the top of the provincial capital in his Dragonform, Linley suddenly spread out his spiritual energy, easily encapsulating that luxurious castle in the center of the city within it.

Prince Julin was living there. “Boss, should I handle it?” Bebe was flying side by side with Linley.

“No!” Whenever Linley thought of his bro, Reynolds, the flames of fury in his heart burned ever hotter. Although he had flown here at high speed, Linley still felt that this trip had been a long one. Too long!

Linley’s dark golden eyes had turned slightly bloodshot.

“Julin!” Linley ground his teeth and said in a low voice, and then his dark golden eyes became all the more grim and callous.

Thousands of guards were currently on patrol outside the administrator’s castle of the Southeast Administrative Province’s provincial capital. There were many beautiful maids and servants walking about the castle as well.

Within one quiet, secluded room within the castle. Behind a hazy gauze screen. The sound of low panting. A coquettish voice moaning nonstop. Two bodies intertwined with each other.

After a long moment...

A low growl. And then, the room returned to utter silence.

“Your Imperial Highness.” A soft, sweet voice.

“Baby, you really are bewitching. You are much better than my wife.” Prince Julin opened the gauze screen, then put on his long robe and left the bed. “Baby, rest here. I’ll order someone to bring you food.”

“Thank you, your Imperial Highness.” The woman behind the gauze screen had jade hair that cascaded down like a waterfall, and her eyes seemed utterly bewitching.

A hint of a satisfied smile was on the corner of Prince Julin’s face.

He was very satisfied with his life.

What was so good about being an Emperor? As a Prince, he had as many servants as he wished and as many women as he wished. Wasn't this sort of life even better than that of a god's?

"That Big Brother of mine. Jeeze. All I did was cause that Reynolds to die, but he lectured and berated me." Prince Julin pursed his lips disdainfully.

His life was extremely valuable.

If a common noble died, he died. What was the big deal about it? Prince Julin's absolute bottom line was this; anything that might threaten his life, no matter how small, had to be stopped.

Prince Julin walked out of the room, feeling satisfied.

"Your Imperial Highness," the two female attendants outside the room said respectfully.

Prince Julin gently stroked the face of one of the female attendants. Laughing lightly, he said, "Baby, tonight, you can come serve me."

"Yes, your Imperial Highness." A hint of joy actually appeared on that female attendant's face.

Just as Prince Julin was feeling that his life was simply too perfect, a cold voice rang out from the skies above, covering the entire castle. "Prince Julin, are you enjoying your life?" That voice was filled with resentment and hatred, causing Prince Julin to suddenly tremble.

"Who is it?!" The castle guards all raised their weapons and roared angrily.

"Up above. Ahhh! It is a demon!" A guard saw Linley standing in mid-air.

Prince Julin's heart was filled with terror and fear. He didn't know who had come to act against him. The people whom Prince Julin had offended were all people who were inferior in status to him. Prince Julin knew very well that some powerful experts were not to be offended. So who was this? Prince Julin raised his head high... and his face turned ashen in terror.

Linley was currently standing in mid-air above Prince Julin's residence. In full Dragonform, Linley was surrounded by a dense fog of azurish-black battle-qi,

which swirled and roiled about him. Linley did indeed look like a demon from the abyss.

His dark golden eyes were staring down at Prince Julin.

All Linley had done was to use his spiritual energy to search and investigate. After hearing Prince Julin's words to the two female attendants, he knew that this person was indeed Prince Julin.

Linley's body suddenly descended, and a terrifying surge of energy blasted out in every direction.

"Boom!"

The nearby buildings were all blown apart by this terrifying blast of force. Linley landed heavily on the ground, and the stone floor of the residence instantly cracked and shattered, as though it had been struck by a massive falling boulder.

"Milord, who are you?" Prince Julin squeezed out a smile, appearing to be incredibly humble.

The man in front of him was a Saint. Prince Julin was absolutely certain of this.

Prince Julin deeply cared about his life, so he never offended any Saints.

"Milord, is there perhaps some mistake? Why have you sought me out?" Prince Julin forcibly maintained his smile, but just at this time, from afar, a guard's voice could be heard. "Your Imperial Highness, that person is Master Linley. I went to the imperial capital and watched his duel with Lord Haydson."

Many people had watched the duel between Linley and Haydson. People from the Southeast Administrative Province had gone as well. Naturally, that guard recognized Linley.

Prince Julin hadn't gone.

To Prince Julin, watching experts fight wasn't as interesting as playing around with some beautiful women. It was fortunate for him that he was the Emperor's younger brother, because otherwise, in a country like the O'Brien Empire, where people worshipped experts and valued training and personal strength, his life would have been terrible.

“Master Linley?”

Prince Julin’s heart shook. What he had feared the most had come! Previously, at Neil City, he had caused Reynolds death. After Prince Julin had discovered the relationship between Linley and Reynolds, he was filled with regret, but it was too late.

“What the hell did my Big Brother do? Didn’t he say that Linley didn’t know that this affair had something to do with me?” Prince Julin began to curse Johann in his heart. Meanwhile, Linley just stared at Prince Julin.

His dear brother, Reynolds, had died because this Julin had extinguished Reynolds’ last chance at life due to his own cowardice. His dear brother didn’t have to die.

“Do you know why I have come?” Linley was unable to restrain his fury any longer.

“Ah! So it is Master Linley!” Prince Julin hurriedly said. “It is Julin’s honor to be able to welcome you here, Master. But I actually do not know why you have come here, Master.”

By now, groups of people had clustered around them, watching.

There were many of Prince Julin’s women, some of his children, and many guards and female attendants. They all watched with terror. Even the two experts of the ninth rank who were Prince Julin’s special guests stood far away, their hearts filled with terror.

“Master Linley, if there’s anything you want, please speak calmly. I think, Master, you must have some sort of misunderstanding about his Imperial Highness,” the caretaker of the castle said from the side in a trembling voice.

Linley turned back to glance at the caretaker, whose face instantly turned white.

“Misunderstanding?”

Linley walked towards Prince Julin, one step at a time. Cold sweat poured from Prince Julin’s forehead. He was so frightened that not a hint of blood could be seen in his face. Linley’s lips quirked upwards, revealing a terrifying smile.

“Whoosh!” Linley’s ferocious black draconic tail suddenly moved, wrapping around Prince Julin’s body and constricting him like a whip.

“Ah!!!” A shrill scream burst out from Prince Julin’s throat, sounding like a woman being molested.

Linley’s dark golden eyes stared remorselessly at Prince Julin. “Why are you screaming? I haven’t even used any force, but you are already screaming. If I were to use force...”

“Spare me, Master Linley, spare me,” Prince Julin said, terror-stricken.

“Spare you?”

Linley’s voice suddenly turned into a guttural growl. “Me, spare you? What about my brother Reynolds? Who spared his life?” Linley’s black draconic tail, radiating a cold light, began to squeeze while lifting Prince Julin into the air.

Prince Julin was constricted and lifted into the air by this draconic tail which was as thick as a strong man’s arm. As the tail began to tremble slightly, Prince Julin began to howl in terror. “Ah!!” “Slash.” Fresh blood began to dye Prince Julin’s clothes red.

“Stop!” Many of the loyal guards raised their weapons from afar and howled angrily. They didn’t dare to charge forwards, but they did dare to at least shout.

“Fuck off!” Linley frowned, his heart filled with fury.

“Boom!” A terrifying surge of energy erupted from Linley, blasting out in every direction. All of the surrounding guards and female attendants were sent flying. Some unlucky guards ended up smashing into walls head first, with their brains splattering. Others fell to the ground and were heavily injured.

In the blink of an eye, aside from Linley and Prince Julin, not a single person was still on his or her feet.

“The Boss has really gone crazy.” Bebe watched quietly from midair.

Linley retracted his gaze from the surrounding people, turning to stare at the bloody-faced Prince Julin. “Julin, don’t worry. I’ll let you live for a bit longer... I’ll let you have the sensation of a slow death.” Linley’s voice was very soft, but it filled Prince Julin with the utmost fear.

“Master, please spare me. I’ll do anything you want, give you anything you want, as long as I am capable, anything is fine, but the important thing, don’t kill me.” Prince Julin still thought that he could escape from this situation alive.

Linley didn’t pay any attention to Prince Julin’s squabbling. The only thing in his mind was the smile of his Fourth Bro, Reynolds. That adorable youngster, so dissolute and lazy, had spent ten days and ten nights waiting for him in a blizzard when he had been carving ‘Awakening From the Dream’.

“Crunch.” A cringe-inducing sound could be heard from Prince Julin’s entire body.

His waist had suddenly become compacted to the waist of a slender young lady. Prince Julin’s face was utterly red. He wasn’t able to say a single sentence, and fresh blood was leaking forward from his mouth.

“Spare... spare...” Prince Julin stared at Linley in terror.

The distant serving women and attendants all watched in terror as Prince Julin’s waist visibly became smaller and smaller.

“Crunch!” Yet another bone-splintering sound could be heard. Blood was pouring forth from Prince Julin’s mouth, and his face had turned the color of purple jam.

The internal organs in his body had been squeezed to the point of rupture. This sort of pain made Prince Julin wish he could die.

“You can’t die so fast.” Prince Julin’s endurance was far weaker than that of Clayde’s, from all those years ago.

Suddenly, Linley’s draconic tail loosened and retracted. That nearly-dead Prince Julin fell to the ground. Prince Julin let out a sigh of relief, but before he even hit the ground...

“Bam!” Linley’s right leg kicked viciously against Prince Julin’s body.

Prince Julin’s eyes turned round from utter terror.

Prince Julin’s body was sent flying from this kick, and he smashed hard against a distant wall. That thick, sturdy wall was actually shattered by the collision. As for Prince Julin? His weak, fragile body instantly disintegrated into a pile of

mud-like flesh and bone, strewn everywhere.

“Fourth Bro, don’t worry. I won’t spare a single one of those people who caused you to die,” Linley said softly to himself. A hint of moisture could be seen in those dark golden eyes.

Linley turned to look at Bebe in mid-air.

“Let’s go. We’re heading to Neil City!”

“Whoosh!” Linley rose straight into the air, flying towards the southeast at high speed with Bebe by his side. The thousands of people in the area below were utterly, deathly silent. Only, Prince Julin’s utterly disintegrated corpse was so eye-catching and so frightful to behold!

As Resilient as a Monolith

“Splash!”

Olivier fell from the skies, slamming down into the waters of the river and kicking up an enormous geyser of water.

“Elder brother!” Blumer, who had been watching at the riverbank, roared loudly, while at the same time charging directly towards the location in the water where Olivier had fallen.

The millions of spectators were simply too numerous. Many of the people at the distant edges couldn’t even see Olivier and the Monolithic Sword Saint do battle. They could only overhear what the people in front were saying about what had just happened. Instantly, the millions of onlookers began to murmur.

The difference between the two was simply too enormous!

After all, Haydson continued to stand there, as though he hadn’t been injured at all.

“Master Linley, Olivier lost?” Emperor Johann said questioningly to Linley, by his side.

“It is still too early to come to any conclusion.” Linley was still staring up at the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, who remained unmoving in mid-air. Linley said to himself, “I wonder what the results are for Haydson, after he took on that attack head on.”

The Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, was feeling extremely uncomfortable right now.

He was extremely confident in his defense. He had roamed the Yulan continent for centuries now, and had never discovered anyone whose defense was stronger than his. Indeed, the obsidian sword’s battle-qi attack just now hadn’t breached his defense in the slightest.

However...

When the obsidian sword had struck against his fist, a strange energy had easily penetrated past his vaunted defense and directly attacked his spirit, catching him off guard and stabbing viciously into his soul.

He felt dizzy, and his head hurt so much it threatened to split apart.

“What a Prodigy Sword Saint. He’s even managed to develop a soul attack technique.” After a moment, Haydson regained his normal faculties. “A young fellow who isn’t even a half-century old was actually able to develop such a unique attack.”

Haydson had tasted this sort of attack long ago!

Soul attacks actually weren’t that unique.

For example, that ‘eldest disciple’ of the War God, Fain, who Linley had met, had caused Linley to nearly faint when his lightning technique struck Linley. It had taken Linley quite a while to recover. This, too, was a form of soul-based attack.

For example, the War God, who simply by speaking could cause someone’s soul to shudder.

The basic principle underlying soul-based attacks was quite simple; it was using one’s spiritual energy to form an attack, then use it against the opponent’s soul.

Simply put, it was a spiritual attack.

But although it was easy in theory, it was extremely difficult to do in practice. This was because spiritual energy, normally speaking, was very soft and malleable, like cotton. In order to do a spiritual attack, one had to transform the cotton into a sharp knife and use it to pierce the opponent’s soul.

Even most Saints were only able to, at most, broadcast their spiritual energy. To use it to attack? To transform cotton into a knife?

Difficult!

But although it was difficult, those top-level experts who had been meditating on the Elemental Laws for a long time were capable of reaching that level.

Haydson had previously experienced this sort of soul-based attack.

“Olivier’s spiritual energy is not very strong. Most likely, it is only on the level of a magus of the eighth rank. If he had the spiritual energy of an Arch Magus of the ninth rank, I would most likely be badly injured. If it was on the level of a Grand Magus Saint...” Haydson laughed calmly.

And then, Haydson looked down into the Channe River.

The Channe River had already regained its usual calm, but Olivier hadn’t reappeared yet.

“Olivier, it seems you won’t come out until you’ve finished repairing your arm.” Haydson laughed loudly, his voice shaking the heavens and reverberating throughout the land.

“Repairing his arm?” Linley frowned, feeling surprised.

“Splash!”

A waterspout suddenly erupted from the river, and a black blur instantly shot up into the sky, once more standing in mid-air and staring at Haydson. Olivier’s damaged, twisted right arm had already returned to its normal condition.

Olivier laughed coldly as he looked at Haydson. “Repairing an arm? Haydson, even if you wanted to do such a thing, you wouldn’t be able to.”

“Light-style elemental essence is indeed miraculous. Some top-grade light-style magi are able to heal even the most grievous of wounds in an instant. However... in terms of defense and attack, the Laws of Light are inferior to the Laws of the Earth,” Haydson said confidently.

The Laws of the Earth.

Linley, too, trained in the Laws of the Earth.

“How can you possibly understand the subtle mysteries of the Laws of Light?” Olivier asked calmly. “Haydson, don’t be over-confident. You didn’t enjoy the feeling of my sword attack just now, did you.”

Haydson frowned.

Even an extremely powerful soul, upon receiving a soul-based attack, would

suffer some wounds.

“With your soul damaged, will you be able to use 100% of your power?” Olivier drew his Lightshadow sword with his left hand.

He wielded his obsidian sword with his right hand, and his Lightshadow sword with his left.

“But I’m different. My arm was broken, but now it is healed. I’m not impacted in the slightest.” Olivier dual-wielded his weapons, with a layer of dazzling white light covering his Lightshadow sword, while a layer of light-devouring cold black aura covered his obsidian sword.

Two diametrically opposite forces.

“I want to see how you will deal with these two totally opposite forces!” Olivier’s eyes flashed with a cold look, and then he instantly transformed into a blaze of white light, as radiant as the sun, while at the same time, an unremarkable series of black lights flashed amidst his radiance.

His speed suddenly increased to his utmost limit!

The skies were once again filled with over 108 Oliviers.

“Clang!” Haydson, his face solemn, drew his earthen-colored heavy sword from his back.

“Haha... you’ve finally drawn your sword.” Olivier’s laughter shook the heavens. The countless spectators were all silent.

Tonight, the night sky was covered by thick clouds, giving the battlefield a very gloomy aura. The spectators below even had the feeling that those dark, thick clouds were so close to Olivier and Haydson that the two could touch the clouds just by raising their hands up.

“Boom!” “Boom!”

Terrifying sonic booms could be heard, as each time Olivier streaked through the sky at high speed, there would be an eardrum-rupturing sonic boom. The power of those sonic booms in the sky was so great that even those lit torches wavered, the flames pressing downwards from the pressure.

Gales of wind caused everyone’s hair to begin to float upwards.

Countless people stared fixedly at this spectacle, hoping they could clearly see what was happening in the skies.

“Clang!” “Clang!”

Each time Olivier’s dual swords clashed against Haydson’s earthen-colored heavy sword, those two light-style and darkness-style bursts of energy would strangely combine and attack together, seeking to break through Haydson’s attack.

“I didn’t expect Olivier to have this sort of attack!” Watching the battle with his head raised, Linley sighed secretly.

He had to admit that Olivier was a genius. Light and Darkness were two diametrically opposed types of Elemental Laws, but Olivier not only was able to train in both at the same time, he was also able to use them together in a very perfect manner.

“Haha...”

With each consecutive blow, Olivier’s loud laughter rang out. “Haydson, what, are you just going to defend? Can it be that your soul is so wounded that you can’t even attack?”

“BOOM!”

A terrifying thunderclap could suddenly be heard from the cloud-covered skies as an enormous bolt of lightning snaked down and struck the ground. A few seconds later, a torrential rain began to fall.

In the blink of an eye, the world was covered with rain.

“Damnit, why does it have to rain now?” the millions of spectators began to curse aloud. Most people had not brought any rain gear. With the rain suddenly descending upon them, they were transformed into a series of half-drowned chickens. However, these spectators continued to raise their heads high, staring at the duel in the skies.

But thanks to the torrential rain, they couldn’t even fully open their eyes as they stared upwards.

How miserable!

Many people were forced to take off their clothes and try to use their clothes to block some of the rain, so as to allow themselves to continue to stare upwards at this duel between absolute experts, which they might not have the chance to see again in a hundred years. But despite this... the thick, heavy rain prevented them from seeing much of the battle in the skies.

Right now, there were very few people who could clearly see what was going on in the skies.

Linley, of course, was one of them.

“Master Linley, what is going on in the duel above?” Emperor Johann asked Linley urgently. The imperial clan was still quite comfortable, because as soon as the rain had started, many large umbrellas were immediately deployed above them.

Linley and the others all continued to sit comfortably dry under those umbrellas.

“Your Imperial Majesty, Haydson continues to defend, while Olivier is wildly attacking him. However... it seems Olivier is totally unable to harm Haydson.” Linley smiled.

But although that was what he said, in his heart, Linley was wondering to himself, “Every single one of Olivier’s attacks contains a spiritual attack component. What sort of shape is Haydson in, exactly?”

The torrential rain continued to fall.

Those countless torches had been extinguished by the rain long ago. Right now, only the illuminating spells of a few light-style magi provided a bit of illumination in the area.

“Olivier, are you finished attacking?” Haydson said calmly.

“What?!” Olivier was suddenly stunned.

Could it be that despite him having attacked for so long, he hadn’t been able to injure Haydson at all? His soul-based attack was his secret weapon.

Wielding both swords in his hands, Olivier stood in mid-air, staring at Haydson.

Haydson looked calmly at Olivier. “When I received your first soul-based attack, I was indeed injured, but afterwards, since I was prepared for them, your attacks weren’t able to harm me at all.”

“Prepared?” Olivier was stunned.

How would one defend against a soul-based attack? Even Olivier himself had no idea.

“Olivier, you must understand, although soul-based attacks are special, you aren’t the only one to use them. There have been quite a number of people in the history of the Yulan continent who have developed soul-based attacks, and I have tasted these attacks before as well. You are only a warrior, after all. Your spiritual energy is far too weak. Most likely, you are only at the level of a magus of the eighth rank. If you were at the ninth rank... then perhaps I would be injured even if I prepared for your attacks. If that were the case my victory today wouldn’t be this easy.”

The Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, looked calmly at Olivier.

“What?!” Olivier found it difficult to accept this.

This was an unbelievably heavy blow to him!

“Olivier, you are already quite impressive, to have reached this level before even a half-century of life.” Haydson gently stroked the earthen-colored heavy blade in his hands. “Now, prepare to receive my most powerful attack. Consider this my way of showing respect for your power. As to whether you will live or die, that will be up to heaven.”

Olivier felt that this was very laughable.

Whether he would live or die?”

“Haydson, don’t be too arrogant. If you have the ability to do so, then come and kill me. Enough talk.” Olivier’s body once more began to blaze with that brilliant white light, intermixed with that dark black light.

Half his body was covered with pure white light. The other half, pitch black.

“Come!” Olivier’s black and white hair flowed freely in the air. He radiated light in every direction, and the power of those two swords in his hands reached

a crescendo as well.

Wielding his earthen-colored heavy sword in one hand, the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, had a smile on his face.

“This is my most powerful attack. The name of the attack is... ‘Worldbreaker’. If you are to die, I wish you to die with full knowledge of what killed you!” Haydson had already forgotten how many so-called geniuses had died to him.

Was Olivier the sixth, or the seventh?

He had forgotten.

But Haydson knew that if a genius were to die, then they would no longer be a genius.

“Elder brother!” Blumer roared mightily into the skies. “Be careful!” Tears streamed down from Blumer’s eyes, but given the torrential rain, no one could tell if they were tears or just raindrops.

Although the torrential rain was thunderously loud, powerful experts were still able to clearly hear the words between these two combatants.

Hearing his younger brother’s shout, ensconced in black and white light, the corner of Olivier’s lips actually tugged upwards, forming a perfect curve. Surrounded by black and white light, Olivier was very dazzling to the eye. To the spectators below, Olivier seemed to be a bright star shining in the night rain.

“Boom!”

Olivier suddenly moved, and a terrifying sonic boom could be heard as he transformed into a dazzling line of light that streaked towards the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson.

“Haaaaaaaaaargh!” Haydson let out a loud yet calm shout.

The Lightshadow sword and the obsidian sword seemed to have merged together, and the dark light and the white light crackled and swirled together, as Olivier, his face fierce, viciously swung down both swords at close range for one final blow...

But as Haydson swung his giant earthen sword towards him, it seemed to carry the power to shatter the entire world.

“BAAANG!”

A terrifying loud collision sound could be heard, as though the world itself had exploded. At the same time, a terrifying gust of hurricane-like wind blasted in every direction as the torrential rain fell down in sheets, carried by the force of that blast of wind.

“Splash!” A human figured covered with dim black and white light fell at high speed into the Channe River... and on the surface of the Channe River, a large amount of a red colored liquid could be seen.

A Time and a Place

In turn, Haydson's body had been knocked flying far away at high speed by this terrifying clashing force. Only after flying backwards for nearly a hundred meters did Haydson stabilize himself, and a hint of blood leaked out from Haydson's mouth.

Haydson wiped the blood away, staring down at the Channe River.

"What a fine Prodigy Sword Saint. His final attack truly was powerful," Haydson murmured to himself. At a do or die moment, Olivier's final attack had reached a new level of power, and had actually broken through Haydson's defense and struck Haydson's body, causing him to be injured.

"Rumble." The torrential rain continued to fall nonstop, and on the surface of Channe River, the waves of water roiled about. Quickly, that 'scarlet red' color atop the surface of the river dissipated and disappeared from sight.

A deathly silence!

Everyone had fallen silent, and the people at the two banks of the river stared into the Channe River. Everyone wanted to know, had that glorious Prodigy Sword Saint died, just like that?

"Elder brother!" Blumer didn't hesitate at all. Shedding bitter tears of pain, he threw himself directly into the turbid waters of the Channe River.

"Master Linley, did Olivier die?" Emperor Johann was worried.

Linley shook his head. "I'm not sure either." As he spoke, Linley lowered his head to glance at Bebe, who looked upwards at Linley with resignation. "Boss, Olivier's aura is extremely weak right now, and he isn't even breathing. I can only detect the barest hint of life in him. It seems he really is about to die."

The countless spectators were all discussing this situation in hushed tones, wondering if Olivier had truly died. But everyone still remembered... Olivier's

dazzling final blow.

“Plop!” Water sprayed everywhere.

Carrying a body, Blumer rushed out of the water. Linley could instantly tell that Olivier’s face was drained of all blood and was completely white, and his lips were ashen as well. He was no longer breathing.

Only by using spiritual essence to probe him could one sense that Olivier was still alive.

“Move, move!” Carrying the Lightshadow sword, the obsidian sword, and his older brother Olivier in his arms, Blumer charged directly towards the direction of Emperor Johann.

Blumer’s eyes were filled with tears.

“Your Imperial Majesty, your Imperial Majesty, where are the healers? Quick, quick!” Blumer shouted frantically.

For this battle, Emperor Johann had prepared in advance for the most exalted Arch Magus of light magic of the ninth rank in the palace to come.

“Mr. Anders, quick, save Olivier,” Emperor Johann immediately said.

A silver-haired old man immediately walked out from behind Emperor Johann and hurried towards Olivier’s prone body. His hands glowing with white light, he touched Olivier’s body. Soon, color began to quickly reappear in Olivier’s face.

“How is he? How is my older brother?” Blumer said frantically.

Although Blumer was very stubborn and very cold towards others, in Blumer’s heart, he loved Olivier like a father. His older brother had raised him ever since he was young. To Blumer, there was nobody more important than his older brother.

“Don’t be hasty. Just now, all I did was heal the simpler wounds Lord Olivier has sustained. I need to use more healing magic to address his internal injuries.” The silver-haired old man nodded as he spoke, then immediately began to mumble the words to a magic spell. Blumer watched, feeling anxious and nervous, but he didn’t dare to interrupt the work of this light-style Arch Magus.

Soon...

A starry light entered Olivier's body, and the wounds on Olivier's body began to rapidly heal. The efficacy of this healing magic was quite astonishing.

"Hrm?" The silver-haired old man shook his head, puzzled.

"What is it?" Blumer asked frantically.

The silver-haired old man shook his head, frowning. "Lord Olivier's body has been totally healed. His external injuries, his organs, and his broken bones are all restored. But Lord Olivier didn't wake up. This..."

Linley was carefully inspecting Olivier as well.

"Olivier's soul has been wounded," Bebe said mentally to Linley. "I can feel that his spirit is extremely weak right now."

Just at this moment, the gray-robed Haydson flew over slowly from the sky, agilely and gracefully coming to a halt in front of Emperor Johann.

"Haydson!" Blumer stared hatefully at Haydson.

His one and only older brother, his one and only family member. Blumer felt boundless hatred towards Haydson. If it wasn't for the fact that he was far weaker than him, Blumer probably would've charged straight for him.

"Stop staring at me. Your older brother's spirit was heavily wounded, and he is hovering at the point of life and death, but that isn't because of me. When executing his final attack, your older brother seemed to utilize some sort of forbidden technique to attack me, hoping to take me down with him." Haydson's face was rather pale as well.

"Forbidden technique?" Blumer frowned.

Suddenly, he remembered...

A while ago, he wanted to learn the obsidian sword technique from his elder brother, but Olivier had instructed to focus on learning the Lightshadow sword technique, and not to train in the diametrically opposite obsidian sword technique.

"Could it be that there really is some sort of taboo preventing people from utilizing two diametrically opposite Elemental Laws at the same time?" Blumer lowered his head to stare at his older brother.

Olivier's face was ruddy, and his body was clearly in peak condition. But he still didn't wake up, and his spiritual aura was extremely weak, as though it could be extinguished at any moment.

"Lord Olivier lost?"

"His brother carried his corpse out. Alas, the Prodigy Sword Saint has died."

"Who said he died? Maybe he's just unconscious due to his injury."

"No matter what happened, Lord Haydson, the Monolithic Sword Saint, seems to be fine, and even flew down from the skies. Clearly, he is far stronger than Lord Olivier."

Those millions of spectators were all discussing this battle. Although the skies were filled with torrential rain, it couldn't douse their burning ardor. Everyone was filled with excitement at what they had just seen. Regardless of whether Olivier was dead or just passed out from his injuries, one thing was certain...

The victor of this duel was the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson!

This result was one which the vast majority had predicted. After all, Haydson had been famous for too long, and was reputed to be the most powerful Saint alive. He had never been defeated. It was very normal for him to be the victor of this duel.

Everyone would've been stunned if Haydson had lost.

The flood of spectators slowly began to melt away. Many began to head towards the imperial capital, while others headed towards some villages on the outskirts of the city.

The people slowly left, but the soldiers still stood guard.

"My elder brother won't die," Blumer said coldly. And then, carrying his elder brother's body, he ordered his servants to carry the Lightshadow and obsidian swords and follow him. Blumer left, carrying his older brother in his arms.

"I hope Olivier can make it past this disaster." Emperor Johann sighed. Right now, Emperor Johann was surrounded by over a thousand people.

These people were all nobles. Many of them wished to know if Olivier was alive or dead.

“Lord Haydson truly is powerful. Once again, he won easily,” a distant noble’s voice rang out respectfully. Haydson laughed calmly.

And then Haydson looked at Linley. With a loud laugh, he said, “Actually, compared to Olivier, I’d rather have a competition against Master Linley.”

A stunned silence.

Everyone was shocked. Haydson had just completed a major duel with Olivier, and now he wanted to challenge Linley to a duel?

Linley was silent for a moment, then spoke. “Haydson, what do you mean by this?”

Haydson smiled. “Last time at the Colosseum, you and Olivier didn’t finish your duel, but Olivier had drawn his obsidian sword, and you had prepared your adamantine heavy sword. I remember at that time, you had said that your adamantine heavy sword techniques were based on the Laws of the Earth, right?”

“Indeed.” Linley nodded.

“I, too, am a person who studies the Laws of the Earth. I imagine that if we were to engage in a competition, it would be of great benefit to both of us in our attempts to break through to a higher level of understanding.” Haydson looked at Linley. “Linley, I’d like to invite you to spar. Would you accept?”

Neither the surrounding nobles nor Emperor Johann dared to make a sound.

One was reputedly the strongest Saint alive. The other was a Saint who was a genius the likes of which the world had never seen.

“Big Brother...” Wharton couldn’t help but speak out.

Linley turned to glance at his little brother. He chuckled.

Wharton, in his heart, was frantic and angry. He thought to himself, “This Haydson really is despicable. He just finished beating Olivier to the brink of death. Does he now want to kill my Big Brother as well? Is it because he saw both my Big Brother and Olivier are both geniuses, and are afraid that in the future, they would threaten his status?”

Wharton wasn’t the only person thinking this. Many of the people present

were thinking this as well.

After all, Linley and Olivier were both dazzling geniuses. One had been beaten to the point where whether or not he would survive was at question. And now, Haydson invited Linley to spar? Many people naturally questioned his real motives.

“What, you refuse?” Haydson asked with a laugh.

Linley looked at Haydson, a smile on his face. “Name a time, and name a place.”

Haydson was startled.

He immediately understood that this meant Linley was accepting his challenge. “I’ve already competed today against Olivier and am not in peak form. How about this. Three months from now, on August 4th, in the air above Mt. Tujiao, east of the city. Let’s have our competition there.”

“Fine.” Linley smiled and nodded.

Linley wanted to duel with Haydson as well. He had just begun to understand this Pulseguard Defense technique. Combining that with his ‘Profound Truths of the Earth’ attack, Linley didn’t think that he would be easily defeated. After all, he not only was protected by the Pulseguard Defense, he also was protected by his draconic scales. With such powerful defenses, most likely it would be hard to say if Haydson’s was better or his own was better.

“Since this is the case, then your Imperial Majesty, Linley, I’ll bid you farewell.” Haydson nodded to each of them, then transformed into a gray streak of light as he flew away into the sky.

“Big Bro...” Wharton ran over frantically.

“I’m fine. Victory and defeat is yet to be determined.” Linley smiled confidently, and then he led his people back towards their residence.

As for those nobles and the members of the imperial clan, they were all engaged in endless speculation. After a while though, all of them returned back to the imperial capital as well under the cover of rain.

The Channe River once more regained its normal peacefulness. Only the mess

left behind at the riverbanks gave testament to the earlier excitement.



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At the place where the Channe River and the Yulan River intersected, a six-story-tall enormous ship was sailing from the Yulan River into the Channe River. A row of knights was standing in a neat line on the deck.

Many of those powerful knights had magical beasts as well. Ordinary people did not have access to magical beasts; for so many of the knights to have magical beasts meant that the status of the person on this ship was quite extraordinary.

“When we arrive at the Channe River, we’ll be only three days out from the imperial capital of the O’Brien Empire. Unfortunately, we’ll have missed the duel between the Prodigy Sword Saint, Olivier, and Lord Haydson.”

The warriors on the ship’s deck were chatting amongst each other.

Right at this time, a man with white streaked hair came out onto the top deck. He seemed to be a middle-aged man in his forties or fifties. By his side was a brown-furred bear that looked charmingly naïve. This bear was roughly as tall as a person was, and seemed very cute.

“Growl. Growl.” “Master. I really don’t feel comfortable here on the water. Let’s fly instead,” that seemingly charming, naïve bear said to the middle-aged man.

“I know you hate water.” The middle-aged man laughed as he walked to the chain linked side of the boat, staring down into the waves.

“Your Honor.” Seeing the middle-aged man, the soldiers on the ship deck all called out respectfully. Just at this time, a tall, golden-haired beautiful woman came walking out with a smile. Laughing, she headed towards the middle-aged man. “Teacher, we’ve already arrived at the Channe River. We should be arriving at the O’Brien Empire soon.”

The middle-aged man laughed as he glanced at the golden-haired woman. “Haha. Indeed, we are. Delia, I think you are even more impatient than I am.”

The Yulan Empire's Special Envoy

That adorable looking bear laughed as well. "Right, right. As soon as Delia found out that that Linley fellow was here, she immediately started scheming to come as well."

"Big Yellow, do you want to die?" Delia grabbed the big bear by his ear.

"It doesn't hurt. Haha. It doesn't hurt," the big bear said delightedly.

"Hrmph." Delia wrinkled her nose and pouted. "Big Yellow, I know you are powerful, alright? You are a Worldbear and you have thick skin. You aren't afraid of me twisting your ears." As she spoke, she walked over to stand next to the middle-aged man and ignored the bear.

The big bear rubbed its head, said in a deep, adorable voice, "Delia, don't be angry. It was my mistake, alright?"

Delia looked at him and started to laugh.

"Hatton, Delia is just teasing you. She won't get angry that easily," the middle-aged man said with a calm laugh, and then he turned to stare at the skies. "Parry is coming back."

From the skies, a hawk with a wingspan of five or six meters came swooping towards the ship at high speed. This hawk was extremely fast, and it seemed to move at the speed of lightning. Its eyes were golden, and it had a crest of blue feathers atop its head. It appeared very fierce.

This was a magical beast of the ninth rank – the Wildthunder Stormhawk.

The soldiers on the ship did not attempt to block it. Clearly, they recognized this Wildthunder Stormhawk, which flew directly towards and landed next to Delia and the others.

"Little Wind, did you catch anything?" Delia devotedly rubbed the head of the Wildthunder Stormhawk.

Retracting its wings, the Wildthunder Stormhawk stood up, rising to its full height of two meters high. Right now, the Wildthunder Stormhawk was enjoying Delia's attention, closing its eyes as Delia continued stroking its head.

"Parry, get over here," the big bear said unhappily.

The Wildthunder Stormhawk glanced at the big bear, then obediently moved over to it. The Worldbear was a Saint-level magical beast, and an extremely powerful type at that.

Actually, both the Worldbear as well as the Wildthunder Stormhawk were the magical beast companions of that middle-aged man, a Saint-level Grand Magus of the Yulan Empire, Longhaus.

Master Longhaus was a wind-style Grand Magus.

Wind-style Grand Magi were extremely terrifying. When Longhaus had brought his Wildthunder Stormhawk into the Mountain Range of the Setting Sun, he had used the Dimensional Edge spell to heavily injure this Worldbear.

The offensive power of the Dimensional Edge spell was simply too terrifying. It cut through the walls of reality itself.

Against this sort of attack, even a peak-stage Saint such as Haydson could be split into two halves. In addition, wind-style Grand Magi could control the wind to a terrifying degree, and could also move extremely quickly.

It could easily be said that, given enough time, a Grand Magus Saint could easily defeat a Saint-level warrior. But Saint-level warriors were no fools either. Thus, most Grand Magi Saints would work hard to acquire a Saint-level magical beast.

Alas, capturing Saint-level magical beasts was simply too difficult.

Delia stood atop the ship's deck, fiddling with her necklace as she stared to the east. A gentle wind blew, stirring her hair. She was a very beautiful, moving sight. Even those warriors off to the side couldn't help but stare at her and feel moved.

Delia had become extremely famous in the Yulan Empire. She was a genius who had reached the seventh rank as a magus at the young age of twenty-two.

In addition, she had an extremely powerful clan behind her, and had been accepted as an apprentice by the Saint-level Grand Magus, Longhaus. In terms of appearance, she could definitely rank in the top ten of the imperial capital as well. Such a glorious, outstanding girl definitely had many suitors and paramours.

But unfortunately, Delia had refused every single one of them.

Because of her clan and because she had grown up in the imperial capital, Delia was extremely eloquent and very astute in judging the intentions of others. Ever since the news of Linley's battle with Olivier had spread to the Yulan Empire, Delia had schemed nonstop, finally managing to convince the Emperor of the Yulan Empire to send a special envoy to the O'Brien Empire.

Before heading out, they had notified the O'Brien Empire, who had naturally agreed.

"Channe City..." Delia murmured.

That place which occupied her dreams had a person whom she longed for.

The river waters continued to rush forward rapidly. On the front deck, the Worldbear and the Wildthunder Stormhawk stood alongside Delia as the massive ship continued to sail forward at high speed.

Soon, the ship disappeared off into the horizon as it made its way through the Channe River.

The news that a special envoy from the Yulan Empire was coming quickly spread across the imperial capital, and the imperial clan as well as the nobles quickly learned of this as well. But as far as the imperial capital was concerned, they only cared about two things right now.

They only cared about two major duels.

The first duel was the duel that had just happened between the Prodigy Sword Saint, Olivier, and the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson. The second one was the duel that would occur three months from now between the Dragonblood Warrior, Linley, and the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson.

Would Linley learn from the mistakes of his predecessor, Olivier? Or would he

come to the same disastrous end?

Nobody knew.

But in the hearts of the citizens of the Empire, most believed that the strongest Saint, Haydson, would gain victory yet again.

Boulder Street. Count Wharton's estate.

"In the next three months, nobody is permitted to disturb Lord Linley unless there is something critical!" This declaration came forth from the manor ever since that stormy night.

The atmosphere in the estate was extremely tense.

In the rear training courtyard, Wharton trained for a short while. Then, not in the mood for more training, he placed the warblade 'Slaughterer' to one side, then sat down unhappily.

"That Haydson really goes too far," Wharton cursed. As soon as he thought about Linley, he began to worry. "Haydson, if you are so tough, why don't you wait ten years and let my Big Brother reach the Saint level in his human form before dueling with my Big Brother?! What's the point of dueling now?"

"Fuck his granny. He doesn't just go too far. He's absolutely vile!"

Gates walked over, saying angrily, "There are plenty of Saints in the Empire, and the War God's College has many experts as well. Why doesn't Haydson go challenge them? Instead, he challenges his Lordship. His Lordship is only twenty-seven years old. That Haydson is several centuries old."

"No point in cursing him."

Barker walked over, resting his massive long-handled greataxe against the artificial hill. "His Lordship has already agreed to duel with Haydson. Right now, our only option is to hope that his Lordship will win."

"His Lordship definitely will win."

Gates clenched his fist and pumped it in the air several times as he said angrily, "I refuse to believe that Haydson's internal organs are as defensively powerful as his external defense. What's more, that weird thing which his Lordship developed a while ago seems to be really mysterious as well. It

definitely must be extraordinary.”

Gates and the others didn’t really understand how powerful the Pulseguard Defense was.

Linley was within his private courtyard. Right now, he was seated in the meditative stance beneath a tree, constantly training in accordance with the ‘Secret Dragonblood Manual’. Right now, Linley already was at a very high level of understanding. All he needed was battle-qi.

Whenever Linley had any free time, he would train in battle-qi, trying to absorb as much of the energy from the dragonblood in his veins as possible, ideally until reaching the Saint level. However, training battle-qi actually didn’t require too much focus. As long as one trained in accordance with the set methods, that would be enough. Thus, right now, Linley was pondering other questions in his mind.

“Last time, when I encountered the War God’s first disciple, Fain, and when I encountered the War God, I found that they were both capable of soul-based attacks. Olivier also mastered such a form of attack. Most likely, there are many people who have mastered this type of technique. Should I also try to develop this sort of soul-based attack? Even if I don’t, I should at least learn how to defend against it, right?”

While cultivating his battle-qi, Linley continued to wrestle with this question in his mind.

What were the principles underlying soul-based attacks?

And how would one guard against it?

While Linley was thinking and training, Haeru lay resting against the ground, while Bebe was curled up comfortably on Haeru’s back, his eyes half-closed.

“Bebe, do you think Master will be able to beat that Haydson in their duel?” Haeru asked in a low voice.

“Naturally,” Bebe opened his eyes and said with complete confidence.

But then, Bebe said in a low voice, “But of course, that Haydson seems to be really powerful as well. But no matter what, if the Boss ends up at the point of

death in his duel against Haydson, I, Bebe, will immediately charge forward to assist. Hrmph. Two nights ago, everyone just watched as Olivier was beaten half to death. He still hasn't woken up yet. I can't let the Boss succumb to such a state."

"Isn't that a breach of rules?" Haeru inquired questioningly.

When two people dueled, regardless of victory or defeat, others were not to interfere.

"Screw the damn rules. The earth is big and the heavens are bigger, but nothing is bigger than the Boss. How can the rules compare in importance to my Boss's life?" Bebe said arrogantly. "What's more, so what if I, Bebe, interfere? My Boss is a magus, ya know! When a magus duels against a warrior, they usually bring their magical beasts. If I interfere, that isn't a violation of the rules." As he spoke, Bebe felt as though his argument had a lot of merit, and he laughed delightedly.

The gates to the imperial capital were open. The path from the imperial palace to the east gate of the city were all lined with guards from the imperial army, who had been divided up into two neat lines on each side of the street.

The knights of the imperial palace formed into lined regiments, following behind the Emperor's carriage, with a large number of nobles following behind them.

The Saint-level experts of the War God's College, Kenyon and Lanke, had both arrived as well.

This was because they knew that the delegation from the Yulan Empire included a Saint-level Grand Magus. If their side had no Saints present, then their side would seem weaker.

"Why aren't they here yet?" Emperor Johann said unhappily to a nearby palace attendant.

"Your Imperial Majesty, the ship of the Yulan Empire's special envoy is about to reach the river's harbor. Most likely, they'll be here soon," The palace attendant said respectfully.

Emperor Johann nodded.

Without question, the two most powerful nations in the Yulan continent were the Yulan Empire and the O'Brien Empire. Emperor Johann very much wished that his own O'Brien Empire could be superior to and suppress the Yulan Empire.

But alas, the Yulan Empire had its own strong points.

The Yulan Empire had been in existence for over ten thousand years now, and was an ancient nation. What's more, the Yulan Empire had become one of the greatest sources for magi in the world. If the O'Brien Empire had the most Saint-level warriors, then the Yulan Empire could be said to have just as many Saint-level Grand Magi.

After all, Saint-level Grand Magi were far more threatening than Saint-level warriors. For example, that wind-style Saint-level Grand Magus, Longhaus. Not even Haydson would dare say that he was totally confident of defeating him. After all, so long as Longhaus was given a bit of time to prepare, his Dimensional Edge spell could chop Haydson into two halves.

"They are here!"

The many spectators of the O'Brien Empire saw the enormous ship sail over. When they saw that adorable big bear on the deck, as well as that large hawk, many people felt astonished.

"A Worldbear? And a Wildthunder Stormhawk?"

Kenyon and Lanke exchanged glances. They couldn't help but feel astonished. Even if they joined forces, they weren't certain that they would be able to defeat a Saint-level Worldbear.

Delia was dressed in a beautiful long robe and standing next to the wind-style Saint-level Grand Magus, Longhaus. They disembarked together, and behind them came the two magical beasts, the warriors on the ship, and the magical beasts of the warriors.

"Clang!"

The knights of the Empire formed into two ranks, while at the same time raising their pikes high into the air. These knights were specially selected from the finest knights of the imperial palace. All of them were of the seventh rank,

and their leader was a warrior of the eighth rank.

“Teacher, the warriors of the O’Brien Empire really are more powerful than those of our Yulan Empire. They even have a totally different aura. Our imperial capital is a bit too dissolute.” Delia chatted quietly with her teacher as though no one else was present.

Longhaus nodded slightly as well.

The imperial capital of the Yulan Empire was an extremely ancient city, and the ancient clans of the capital only thought of enjoying life. To the contrary, the O’Brien Empire was a nation of warriors, and all of them strove to outdo each other. No wonder it was hailed as the most militarily powerful nation.

Emperor Johann, Lanke, Kenyon, and the palace attendants went to welcome them.

“Delia Leon, right? Haha...” Emperor Johann laughed loudly.

Delia very courteously curtsied. “Special Envoy Delia of the Yulan Empire pays her respects to the mighty ruler of the O’Brien Empire, Emperor Johann. I bring with me the sincerest greetings and well-wishes of the Emperor of the Yulan Empire.”

“Emperor Johann, this is my teacher, Saint-level Grand Magus Longhaus.” Delia smiled as she made the introductions.

Emperor Johann looked at Master Longhaus. “Very happy to meet you, Master Longhaus.”

“I am very honored to meet you as well, Emperor Johann,” Longhaus said with a smile.

Delia couldn’t help but glance around at her surroundings. A hint of disappointment appeared in her eyes. She didn’t see the person she was looking for. But at the same time, she said to Emperor Johann, “Emperor Johann, these two should be two powerful Saint-level experts, correct? Can you introduce them to me?”

Before Delia had arrived, she had already acquired quite a bit of information, and she already knew quite a bit about Kenyon and Lanke.

Special Envoy Delia of the Yulan Empire, the wind-style Grand Magus Longhaus, and the others had now formally entered the imperial capital of Channe, where a grand welcoming ceremony awaited them.

Delia

Delia chatted and jested with Emperor Johann, and their conversation was full of humor and amusement. Emperor Johann's loud, clear laughter rang out nonstop.

Emperor Johann, Delia, Master Longhaus, Kenyon, Lanke and the others walked in front, with the palace servants and palace maids as well as many powerful knights taking up the rear.

The many other nobles followed behind the knights at a distance.

"What a beautiful woman." A group of young nobles of the imperial capital were clustered together. All of these young nobles had an extremely high rank in the Empire. Some were princes, while others were main branch descendants of major clans. They had never lacked for anything, and they often formed little cliques. Nobody in the imperial capital dared to offend them.

The words that had just been spoken came from the son of Prince Julin, Marquis Jeff.

"I think her name is Delia," another noble youngster next to him said. This young noble was named Scott, and he was the Eighth Prince of the Empire. "She's so beautiful and has such grace. There are very few like her, even here in the imperial capital."

Marquis Jeff, Prince Scott, and the others all stared from afar while rating her.

Indeed, Delia was an extremely alluring and charismatic figure.

Her every movement contained the grace and poise of an ancient clan, and as a magus of the seventh rank, her movements were filled with grace. What's more, Delia was beautiful to begin with, and her dazzling, soft golden hair shone like the sun.

Scott sighed emotionally, "Delia is a member of the Leon clan, and was

previously a student at the Ernst Institute. Nowadays, she is the disciple of a wind-style Grand Magus Saint, Longhaus. In the Yulan Empire's imperial capital, she can be considered one of the most influential nobles. No doubt there are countless young nobles pursuing her."

Marquis Jeff's eyes were shining as he stared at Delia. "If I were to successfully woo her, I would be willing to never touch another woman again."

"Cousin Jeff, you are that determined?" Scott laughed as he glanced at Jeff.

"Of course!" Marquis Jeff said with conviction.

Emperor Johann was an extremely biased person. His one and only younger brother was Prince Julin, and Emperor Johann was extremely solicitous of him, to the point of even allowing Prince Julin to take over and rule the Southeast Administrative Province, one of the seven large Administrative Province's.

As the saying goes, love me, love my dog. Naturally, Marquis Jeff was doted upon by Emperor Johann as well. In the imperial capital, his status was extremely high, and this group of young nobles accepted him as their leader.

"Since you've made up your mind, cousin, then I can't let myself fall behind you." Scott laughed confidently. "Cousin Jeff, let's see which of us two bros will be able to successfully woo Ms. Delia."

"Fine." Jeff nodded. With an evil laugh, he said, "If we're successful, it can be said that we'll have really gained a huge amount of face on behalf of all the men of the O'Brien Empire. After all, those young nobles of the Yulan Empire hadn't been able to successfully woo Delia."



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"I imagine that Ms. Delia must be tired after her long journey, along with Master Longhaus. How about this. Let Us order some people to arrange places for Ms. Delia and Master Longhaus to rest. Later at night, after you've rested, you can attend the dinner banquet which We have arranged. What do you say?" Emperor Johann came to a halt once they reached Boulder Street and said.

The residences of Boulder Street had all been constructed by the imperial clan.

When the imperial clan bequeathed estates to nobles or received guests, it was usually all done within the confines of Boulder Street. The estates here couldn't be bought with mere money.

"Then we shall do as you suggest, your Imperial Majesty," Delia said with a smile.

At this moment, Scott and Marquis Jeff quickly walked forward. They, too, knew that Emperor Johann was about to separate from Ms. Delia. They had to seize the opportunity.

Given their status, those guards naturally wouldn't stop them.

"Ms. Delia and Master Longhaus, I imagine you two aren't too familiar with our imperial capital. We shall arrange a guide to accompany you," Emperor Johann said with a laugh.

"Thank you, your Imperial Majesty," Delia said with appreciation.

"Imperial father." "Your Imperial Majesty." At this point, Scott and Marquis Jeff's eyes lit up, and they called out without any hesitation.

Emperor Johann glanced backwards and saw that it was his son as well as his nephew.

"Scott, Jeff, what is it?" Emperor Johann was in a fine mood today.

Marquis Jeff said respectfully, "Your Imperial Majesty, you plan to arrange a guide? Scott and I are as familiar with the imperial capital as our own homes. I think that the two of us can be the guides. We would definitely make Ms. Delia very happy with our services."

Emperor Johann glanced at Jeff and Scott upon hearing these words. How could he not guess what these two really intended?

However, Emperor Johann also thought that Delia was a fine woman. If his nephew or his son were able to successfully woo this woman, that would be a good thing as well.

"Let Us ask Ms. Delia first." Emperor Johann turned to look at Delia. "Ms.

Delia, what do you think?”

Delia glanced at Scott and Marquis Jeff. Immediately, both of them stood slightly straighter, putting on gentlemanly appearances. A hint of laughter appeared in Delia’s eyes.

“Thank you. I’ll trouble you two to assist me then.” Delia curtsied slightly.

“No trouble, no trouble at all,” Scott and Marquis Jeff hurriedly said.

A hint of a smile could be seen on the lips of Master Longhaus, who was by Delia’s side. As his disciple, how could he not understand Delia? When they were in the imperial capital of the Yulan Empire, countless young men had pursued Delia. Given Delia’s skill, she had easily beaten them at their own game and played them like a fiddle.

“Milady Special Envoy, this will be the place where you will live while you are here in the imperial capital.” A palace attendant pointed towards an estate in front of them.

The nearby Marquis Jeff immediately said, “Ms. Delia, the Boulder Street is an extremely famous street within the O’Brien Empire. On this street, there are even several Saints who live here. For example, our Empire’s Prodigy Sword Saint, Olivier, and his younger brother. They both live on Boulder Street. The genius Master Linley and his younger brother both live on Boulder Street as well.”

While they passed between the estates, Marquis Jeff continuously introduced them to her.

“Right. These two geniuses would be considered the most outstanding individuals anywhere in the Yulan continent.” Scott didn’t want to fall behind either.

Delia, hearing their words, couldn’t help but allow a complicated look to appear in her eyes. But naturally, she quickly returned to her normal, friendly smile.

“That isn’t necessarily the case.” A deep, rumbling sound could be heard from the nearby bear.

Scott and Jeff looked at the big bear and immediately squeezed out a smile. When they were in the welcoming party, they had overheard that this big bear was a Saint-level Worldbear. Saint-level magical beasts could freely change their size. A Worldbear was usually well over ten meters high in their normal form.

He could easily crush them to death with a single paw.

“Delia’s older brother is very formidable as well. He is only twenty-seven years old, but has become a magus of the eighth rank. What’s more, he has become the personal disciple of the High Priest.” The big bear looked at Delia. “Delia, am I right?”

Delia smiled slightly and nodded.

Becoming a twenty-seven-year-old magus of the eighth rank was definitely an extremely terrifying accomplishment. At this speed, it would be quite possible for him to become an Arch Magus of the ninth rank before the age of forty.

It must be understood that someone who could reach the ninth rank before the age of forty was, without question, a definite world-shaking genius.

“Dixie is indeed the most talented magus I have ever seen.” Master Longhaus laughed as well. As they spoke, they entered the main hall of their estate.

“Magus talent?”

Lifting his head proudly, Scott said, “Master Longhaus, on the topic of talent as a magus, I understand that our Empire’s Master Linley, also twenty-seven years old, is already an Arch Magus of the ninth rank. What’s more, he is a peak-stage Saint-level warrior.”

“A twenty-seven-year-old Arch Magus of the ninth rank? Impossible!!!” Master Longhaus couldn’t believe it at all. “In the entire history of the Yulan continent, there has never been anyone who could reach the ninth rank before the age of thirty.”

“Scott, is this true?” Marquis Jeff asked questioningly.

Scott said with absolute certainty, “It is true. My Imperial father personally told me this. When Master Linley dueled with Olivier, everyone learned how powerful he was as a warrior, but they didn’t pay attention to his abilities with

magic. He is indeed already an Arch Magus of the ninth rank.”

Hearing Scott’s words, although on an emotional level Longhaus still couldn’t believe it, his intellect told him that this was probably true.

“Master Linley. An Arch Magus of the ninth rank.” Delia wasn’t too surprised.

In Delia’s heart, Linley was a person filled with secrets and miracles. A sixteen-year-old grandmaster sculptor, and supposedly the number two genius magus in all of history. But now, he had become the number one genius magus in all of history. Why would that be ‘impossible’?

“You can keep chatting. Delia, I’m going to go take a rest. If you need to talk to me, just notify Parry,” Longhaus instructed.

“Yes, Teacher,” Delia said humbly. Next to her, Scott and Jeff bowed as well.

“Gentlemen, I’m tired as well. I’ll retire to my room and rest. Excuse me.” Delia rose as well.

Scott and Jeff knew that they couldn’t push her, and they immediately nodded. Delia left, with that Wildthunder Stormhawk by her side.

Ever since Master Longhaus had tamed the Worldbear, the Wildthunder Stormhawk’s primary responsibility became guarding Delia. From this, one could tell how much Master Longhaus cared about her.

“He’s also living on Boulder Street. Maybe he’s very close to me.”

Delia stood in front of her window quietly.

That night at the town of Wushan, when she had bid Linley farewell, then left the Holy Union and returned to her own ancestral nation, she had been preparing to return to the Holy Union after the Yulan Festival. But then, she had heard of the Apocalypse Day that had occurred.

The entire Kingdom of Fenlai had been reduced to rubble and become the playground for magical beasts.

And according to the news available to her clan, a few days before the Apocalypse Day, in the estate of the magus genius, Linley, a demon appeared, attempting to murder the king of the Kingdom of Fenlai. Most likely, Linley himself had already died.

This news had caused Delia to suffer a major illness.

It had taken a full year before she had fully recovered.

In years after this, she had no news of Linley at all, and she had even made up her mind to abandon love and instead focus on carrying out the affairs of her clan and train in magic. But she didn't expect... that a while ago, news came to the Yulan Empire of Linley and Olivier's duel.

This news caused Delia's deadened heart to immediately grow excited. She felt as though she were full of energy and full of hope.

After a few machinations, she arranged for today's visit.

Delia had planned to wait until the next day before visiting Linley, but after spending merely half an hour in her room, she felt as though she had waited for half a year.

Especially after learning that Linley also lived on Boulder Street... she could no longer resist.

"Little Wind, tell Teacher that I plan to pay Linley a visit," Delia said to the Wildthunder Stormhawk. A while later, Master Longhaus appeared outside her door.

An indulgent smile was on Master Longhaus' face. "Delia, I knew that you wouldn't be able to sit still for long before deciding to go see him." Longhaus knew everything there was to know about his student Delia's affairs.

A bashful red flush crept onto Delia's face.

"Teacher!" Delia wrinkled her nose. "Stop making fun of me. Let's go."

"Fine, fine." Longhaus laughed.

Delia and Master Longhaus, followed by the Worldbear and the Wildthunder Stormhawk, left the estate. When they did, they saw Jeff and Scott waiting outside, seated.

"Ms. Delia?" Jeff and Scott's eyes lit up, and they immediately rose to their feet. "Where are you headed?"

Delia's forehead creased, but she still managed to say with a smile, "I was

planning to go pay a visit to your so-called genius, Master Linley.”

“Oh, so you are going to visit Master Linley?” Marquis Jeff hurriedly said. “That’s a good idea. But I’m afraid that it will be difficult for you to see him. This is because over two months from now, Master Linley will be engaging in a duel with Lord Haydson at Mt. Tujiao.”

“What?” Delia was stunned, and for once, lost her cool.

“Oh, you just arrived, so you didn’t know. Two days ago, Olivier and Lord Haydson dueled, with the result being that Lord Olivier was badly injured to the point of death. Lord Haydson then immediately invited Master Linley to a duel as well, and Master Linley has already accepted,” The nearby Scott explained.

Meeting Ten Years Later

“Linley and Haydson?” Master Longhaus said in surprise as well.

Marquis Jeff nodded repeatedly. “Right. Two nights ago, Lord Olivier was injured by Lord Haydson so badly that he is still in a coma. Immediately afterwards, Lord Haydson challenged Master Linley.”

Marquis Jeff and Scott’s words both contained some resentment, suggesting that Haydson was going too far.

“This Haydson is reputed to be the most powerful Saint. For him to be able to injure Olivier so badly that he entered a coma means that Haydson’s reputation is definitely deserved. No matter how much of a genius Linley is, he is only twenty-seven...” Master Longhaus was somewhat dissatisfied as well.

He knew that his disciple, Delia, liked Linley. Naturally, he himself looked favorably on Linley as well.

“Olivier was injured to the point of entering a coma?” Delia’s eyes were blazing. “How could he be in a coma after receiving treatment from light magic?”

No matter how serious the injury, light magic could easily and totally repair it. And what’s more, there was another type of magic that was even more effective than light magic for healing; Life Magic!

The three types of High Magic; Necromantic Magic, Oracular Magic, and Life Magic.

As long as one didn’t die, even if one’s soul was heavily damaged, Life Magic could heal it.

“It seems it has something to do with his soul.” As a prince, Scott knew quite a bit.

“His soul?” Master Longhaus frowned. “Can it be that Haydson possesses a

soul-based attack?” Actually, Grand Magus Saints were generally proficient in soul-based attacks.

Generally speaking, after beginning to gain insight into the Laws, it wasn’t hard for them to use soul-based attacks, given their powerful spiritual energy.

“In your opinion, does Linley have any chance of defeating Haydson?” Delia suddenly asked.

“Of course not,” Scott said bluntly. “Lord Haydson has been famous for centuries, and nobody has ever been able to defeat him! Master Linley competed a while ago against Lord Olivier, and the two were roughly on par. Since Lord Haydson was able to beat Olivier into such a terrible condition, it is very possible that he might badly injure Linley or even kill him.”

No matter how calm and collected Delia was, she was beginning to worry for Linley.

What if Linley was killed?

Delia didn’t even dare to imagine such a thing.

“Would Haydson truly be so merciless as to go full force?” Delia’s face still maintained its calm.

“Ms. Delia, two days ago, when Lord Haydson dueled Lord Olivier, he went full force on Lord Olivier. How could he be merciful with Master Linley?” Marquis Jeff said.

Master Longhaus shook his head. “When Saints do battle, unless there is a huge gap in power, we do not dare to hold back. If you hold back but your opponent goes full force, you might die.”

Delia was silent for a moment.

“Ms. Delia?” Scott and Marquis Jeff called to her softly.

“Nothing. Let’s go.” Delia’s face returned to her normal, professional smile, but her smile was somewhat forced.

Marquis Jeff and Scott both nodded.

At Count Wharton’s estate.

“Ms. Delia, as I said earlier, you won’t necessarily be able to see Master Linley.” Marquis Jeff laughed, then casually spoke to the gate guard, “Go report that the Eighth Imperial Prince, Marquis Jeff, and the Special Envoy from the Yulan Empire have come here to meet with Count Wharton.”

“Yes. Please wait here a moment.”

One of the guards outside the estate ran inside to make his report.

Delia and the others knew that given Linley’s current status, meeting him would be very difficult. Right now, their only option was to first see Wharton, and then ask to meet with Linley.

“Everyone, please come in.”

Delia, Master Longhaus, Marquis Jeff, and Scott all entered the Count’s residence.

Within the main hall.

“Wharton.” Scott walked into the main hall, laughing in a very familiar manner. “Let me make some introductions. This beautiful young lady is the Special Envoy from the Yulan Empire, Ms. Delia.”

Scott was the Imperial Eighth Prince, while Nina was the Seventh Imperial Princess. Wharton naturally was extremely familiar with Scott.

“The Special Envoy from the Yulan Empire? Why has she come to meet me?” Although Wharton was very surprised, he still smiled politely. “Ms. Delia, an honor to meet you.”

“Count Wharton,” Delia smiled as she spoke. “This is my teacher, the wind-style Grand Magus Saint, Master Longhaus.”

Wharton was startled. Housekeeper Hiri, standing behind him, was startled as well.

In the O’Brien Empire, Saint-level warriors would be seen from time to time, but they had never seen a Saint-level Grand Magus. After all, there were extremely few Grand Magi in the O’Brien Empire.

“Wharton, the Special Imperial Envoy has arrived?” a loud, brash voice rang out. It was the fifth of the Barker brothers, Gates.

Wharton had been in the middle of his training with Barker and his brothers. Hearing the report from his subordinates, he had stopped training and come out to welcome the guests. Out of curiosity, Gates had come over as well.

“Whoah. What a pretty girl.” Gates’ eyes shone.

“Gates, this is the Special Imperial Envoy, Ms. Delia. This is the wind-style Grand Magus Saint, Master Longhaus.” Wharton made the introductions, afraid that Gates would cause a diplomatic disaster.

Gates’ attention immediately turned to Master Longhaus.

“Whoah! A Grand Magus Saint!” Gates’ eyes were as wide as an ox’s.

Master Longhaus secretly sighed to himself. Good grief. Where did these people come from? Wharton’s massive physique had already shocked Longhaus, but Wharton was at least relatively handsome. Gates was totally different. His waist was astonishingly thick, and the man himself looked like a giant bear.

“Step away from my Master,” a deep voice rang out.

The big bear behind Master Longhaus suddenly began to grow in size. Originally, he was only two meters tall, but suddenly he increased to three meters in height. The Worldbear lowered his head to stare at Gates, a hint of delight in his eyes.

“A Saint-level magical beast?” Gates raised his head to stare at the Worldbear.

Delia immediately went straight to the point. “Count Wharton, my teacher and I have come for the purpose of meeting with Master Linley.”

“To see my Big Bro...” Wharton frowned.

These people didn’t have a low status, and they even had a Grand Magus Saint with them. However, to Wharton, his Big Brother’s training was more important. After all, in more than two months’ time, he would be in a major duel.

“Very sorry, but my Big Brother is focusing on his upcoming duel with Haydson, and he can’t be disturbed,” Wharton said. When he mentioned

Haydson's name, he didn't have the slightest bit of respect to his voice.

Hearing these words, Delia, as well, felt that Linley's preparation for his duel was more important. After being silent for a moment, she said, "Then... I won't disturb him."

Longhaus, by her side, sighed secretly, then said in a loud voice, "Count Wharton, my student, Delia, was previously also a student at the Ernst Institute, and she was a very good friend and classmate of your Big Brother's. They haven't met for ten years."

"A student of the Ernst Institute?" Wharton's heart was swayed.

Actually, every day, Linley would still eat and rest like normal. After all, he didn't train nonstop like when he was developing his Pulseguard Defense. It wasn't a big deal if he paused for a bit to welcome some guests.

If they were people that Linley didn't know, Wharton would refuse them.

But this was his Big Brother's old schoolmate.

"Then... come with me." Wharton nodded.

Delia's fists clenched nervously. She took a deep breath to calm herself down. By her side, Master Longhaus laughed as he patted Delia on the shoulders. "Relax."

"An old classmate?" Scott and Marquis Jeff were both surprised.

But Delia walked in front of them, not paying attention to them in the slightest. Scott and Jeff therefore quite conscientiously maintained their silence.

After walking for a while...

"Ms. Delia, my Big Bro is training in the courtyard in front of us." Wharton laughed, while Gates hurriedly said, "I'll go inform his Lordship."

Delia could feel her breathing grow more rapid.

Ten years!

The year Linley's father had died, Delia had parted ways with Linley. In the blink of an eye... it had been ten full years. Delia's eyes closed for a moment. Once her eyes opened again, she had returned to her normal calm.

“Bebe, out of the way. I have something important to report,” Gates’ loud voice rang out from the courtyard.

“Your Lordship, there’s someone named Delia outside. She says she’s your old classmate and wants to see you?”

“Delia?” a calm voice that carried a hint of surprise rang out from within the courtyard. The voice wasn’t very loud, but to Delia, the words seemed to ring in the skies with the power of a thunderbolt.

No matter how calm or tranquil one normally was, when one met with someone one had been thinking about for ten years... she couldn’t prevent her heart from shaking.

“Whoosh!” A gentle gust of wind blew past the surrounding trees, gently lifting up Delia’s long golden hair, causing it to sway with the wind.

Delia couldn’t help but narrow her eyes due to the wind.

Just at this moment, the figure she had dreamed about over a million times appeared in front of the courtyard’s gate. The man wore a light blue robe, and his formerly short hair had grown long.

Delia carefully looked at him.

“He’s a bit taller than he was, and much more mature.” Seeing the man of her dreams, for a moment, Delia couldn’t speak.

“Delia. It really is you,” Linley suddenly said out in a startled, joyful tone.

“It is me.” Delia finally was able to speak.

Linley’s eyes were as dark and profound as the sea. Quickly, he noticed Master Longhaus by Delia’s side, as well as his Worldbear. “A Saint-level magical beast. Worldbear?”

“Linley, this is my teacher, the wind-style Grand Magus Saint, Master Longhaus. The Worldbear is his magical beast companion.” Delia finally recovered from her earlier stupor.

“Come in.” Linley smiled.

Seeing Linley’s smile, for some reason she herself didn’t understand, Delia felt

a hot gush of warmth in her heart. “Is this feeling... happiness?” Delia’s eyes were turning red.

“Wharton, you can help welcome these two.” Linley glanced at Marquis Jeff and Scott, then didn’t say anything else.

Scott and Marquis Jeff weren’t angry at all. They immediately left respectfully. After all, the man was a Saint. Even his Imperial Majesty would be respectful to him. How could he possibly waste time on nobles like them?

Around a stone table in the courtyard.

Linley, Delia, and Longhaus were all seated around the table.

“What are you looking at?” The Worldbear glanced at the Blackcloud Panther, Haeru. As a Saint-level magical beast, the Worldbear was an extremely proud creature.

“You, you stupid bear,” Haeru sneered aloud.

“Saint-level magical beast?” Longhaus and Delia, hearing Haeru speak, both turned to look at Linley in astonishment.

“Don’t squabble, Haeru.” Linley glanced at Haeru, and Haeru immediately crouched down, no longer paying any attention to the Worldbear. Actually, Haeru himself knew that he wasn’t a match for the Worldbear. But at the same time, Haeru wasn’t afraid either... because the Worldbear’s speed was inferior to his own.

But Bebe actually waved his claws in a threatening manner towards the Worldbear.

“Bebe.” Delia was extremely delighted. “Come here.”

Very obediently, Bebe made a single hop and landed directly into Delia’s arms.

“Bebe, long time no see.” Delia devotedly petted Bebe on his glossy fur, and Bebe closed his eyes contentedly.

Although she was petting Bebe, Delia was still looking at Linley.

In the past, Linley had been very hard and callous. But now, he seemed more

gentle and much more natural and at ease.

“Master Linley, I hear you are going to duel with Haydson?” Longhaus started off the conversation.

“Right.”

Linley smiled and nodded.

Delia turned her head to stare at Linley and said, “Linley, can it be that you are confident that you can defeat Haydson?”

“No,” Linley said honestly. Delia was one of his extremely few close friends at the Ernst Institute. Aside from Yale, Reynolds, and George, Delia was probably his closest friend.

Seeing Delia, Linley couldn't help but think back to their final meeting from ten years ago.

That night...

Delia had come late at night to see Linley and tell him that she was leaving the Holy Union. She said that before leaving, she wanted a hug. But who would've expected that their goodbye hug would have turned into a goodbye kiss?

Linley truly had been stunned by that kiss.

Even today, upon seeing Delia, Linley couldn't help but think back to that night.

“You aren't confident?” Delia chewed her lips, then asked, “Then, Linley... can you cancel the duel and not compete against him?”

Master Longhaus shook his head. “Delia, how can you say something so foolish? After two Saints have already agreed to a duel, how can one back out?”

Delia's Protector

Master Longhaus could clearly tell that his disciple cared about Linley so much that she had lost her wits.

"Delia, it is fine. Don't worry!" Linley laughed. Linley felt very moved by Delia's obvious concern.

"Okay." Delia nodded.

However, Delia was still worried. After all, the person dueling with Linley was reputedly the most powerful Saint alive; the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson.

Longhaus looked at Linley, then at Delia. Laughing, he said, "It's been quite a while since you two classmates have met with each other. I won't disturb you. Let me go for a walk. The two of you can have a nice chat. I imagine, after ten years, you have many things to say to each other."

Delia cast a grateful glance at her teacher.

Clearly, Master Longhaus was giving her a chance to have some alone time with Linley.

As he spoke, Master Longhaus led his Worldbear away from that courtyard, leaving behind only Linley, Delia, Bebe, and Haeru.

Delia lowered her head, continuing to stroke Bebe's fur. She was waiting for Linley to speak.

A beautiful woman, petting an adorable pet. This was a soul-stirring image... but Linley only felt awkward. If he was facing a Saint, Linley wouldn't feel any fear at all, but facing Delia, Linley felt very complicated.

The female of his age group whom he was most familiar with was definitely Delia.

After all, they grew up together.

Linley wasn't a dummy. He knew how Delia felt... and this was why Linley felt so awkward. Especially now that he was alone with her.

"These past few years, have you been well?" After a long silence, Linley finally managed to force out this rather blunt and graceless phrase.

Delia raised her head, glancing at Linley. She actually let out a chuckle. "Linley, you are already a Saint-level expert. Since when have you become so shy? I've been fairly well these years. With my clan and my teacher backing me up, who would dare to mistreat me?"

After hearing Delia's words, Linley felt slightly more relaxed.

"What have you been up to these years?" Delia asked softly.

"Not too much." Linley seemed to once again think back to what had happened ten years ago. Ten years ago, after learning of his father's death, he had given up everything and set his mind upon avenging his father.

He had walked farther and farther along the road to revenge, and in the end he had indeed killed Clayde. But due to the encirclement and battle with those six Special Executors of the Radiant Church, in the end, his most dearly beloved Grandpa Doebling had sacrificed his soul for him...

Three years of painstaking training in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, six years of quiet meditation in the O'Brien Empire.

That battle with Stehle, that battle with those six Angels, that sparring match with McKenzie... one scene after another appeared in his mind. As they did, without holding anything back, Linley began to tell Delia what had happened.

Delia stopped petting Bebe, intently listening to every single word Linley said.

Right now, Linley spoke in a very calm, simple manner, as though he were very relaxed. But Delia could totally imagine what Linley's past ten years of life had been like. After finishing speaking, Linley couldn't help but sigh repeatedly.

"Linley." Delia suddenly reached out to take Linley by the hand, gripping it tightly!

Linley raised his head to stare at Delia in surprise. Delia was staring at him. "Linley, don't let your life be so exhausting. You've done very well already."

Delia's hands were rather cold.

But Linley could feel the beat of Delia's heart through her tight grip. It was beating very quietly. Linley felt a surge of warmth in his own heart, slowly thawing a small part of his frozen heart.

"Thank you," Linley said softly.

"Don't say thank you to me." Delia shook her head, her scorching gaze on Linley's face.

The air between the two of them grew warm. For some reason, Linley felt himself grow a bit muddle-headed. Scenes of himself and Alice would drift to his mind, but then they would be replaced by that kiss he had shared that night with Delia. His heartbeat sped up as well. Linley actually was growing a bit frantic.

"Bebe." Linley looked at Bebe, then looked at Delia. "Delia, do you know how powerful Bebe has gotten?" Under that sort of atmosphere, the only thing the panicking Linley could do was immediately change the topic.

Linley didn't know what he might end up doing if that atmosphere continued.

Thus, Linley decided to simply change the topic.

Delia secretly sighed to herself. She was skilled in negotiations, and thus she naturally was a student of psychology as well. When she had been at the Ernst Institute, she had already begun studying psychology. In fact, the reason she started psychology was to better understand Linley.

Delia understood Linley very well.

Delia knew that, after having experienced what he had with Alice, although Linley had seemingly already forgotten about her, in truth... the after-effects of that relationship were not something that Linley could simply forget about as easily as that.

First love was actually very fragile.

Especially for a stubborn person such as Linley. Once he truly loved someone, then he would place an even higher value on that first love than normal people. The failure of that first love would unconsciously cause Linley to have

somewhat of a phobia towards love.

Even if other females tried to approach him, Linley would naturally recoil.

Delia understood that a layer of ice had already covered Linley's heart. If one wished to melt that layer of ice, one couldn't be too hasty. It would have to be melted one step at a time.

Delia deeply loved Linley, and in her heart, she felt pain on Linley's behalf.

Linley had suffered so much. One loved one after another had left him. True, he was extremely accomplished, having become a peak-stage Saint at the age of twenty-seven. But how much bitterness and suffering had occurred on the path he had taken?

Delia truly didn't wish for Linley to continue exhausting himself. For Linley's sake, Delia had already made up her mind to spend as much time as would be needed. As long as she could help Linley be a bit more relaxed and a bit happier, she would be very satisfied.

"Delia, what are you thinking about?" Linley saw that Delia seemed to have gone daydreaming.

Delia immediately snapped out of it and laughed, "What am I thinking about? I'm thinking about you." Linley couldn't help but be stunned. Seeing the look on Linley's face, Delia laughed. "I'm joking."

Linley laughed as well.

"What did you want to say about Bebe just now?" Delia laughed.

"Bebe, want to say a few things to Delia?" Linley laughed as he looked at Bebe.

"Say a few things?" Delia looked at Bebe in surprise. That ordinary little Shadowmouse she had seen at the Ernst Institute could speak? All magical beasts capable of speech were at the Saint level.

Bebe jumped to his feet, clambering onto the stone table. Standing tall, Bebe raised his little head proudly and said in a loud voice, "Ms. Delia, let me tell you a secret. When the Boss and I were in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, the Boss would often talk to me about you. He even said that you had forcibly

kissed him once!”

“Whap!” Linley immediately slapped towards Bebe, but Linley’s palm passed straight through ‘Bebe’. It was nothing more than Bebe’s after-image!

Bebe was standing in mid-air, laughing at Linley delighted.

“Bebe, you little rascal.” Linley didn’t know whether to laugh or cry.

He had never said such a thing before. Bebe actually made that all up.

“Bebe, be good, come over to me.” Delia stretched her hand out, and Bebe immediately hopped into Delia’s bosom again. In Delia’s warm embrace, he seemed to feel very comfortable, and even winked a few times at Linley.

Thanks to Bebe’s intentional ‘teasing’, Linley and Delia were both laughing constantly. Time flew by very quickly, and soon, the sky gradually began to darken.

Seeing how the sky was darkening, Delia suddenly remembered that tonight, Emperor Johann had arranged a major welcome banquet for her.

“Linley, it’s getting late. I need to leave for now. Tonight, Emperor Johann has arranged a dinner banquet for me. I have to attend,” Delia said apologetically.

Linley nodded slightly. “Then I won’t keep you any longer.”

“Will you go tonight?” Delia suddenly asked.

“Me?” Linley laughed. “Emperor Johann didn’t invite me, and I don’t like dinner banquets. Forget it.”

Delia nodded slightly.

Actually, how could Emperor Johann not have invited Linley? Only, Wharton had already refused on his older brother’s behalf. He knew that Linley didn’t like banquets, and also didn’t like dealing with those nobles.

“Farewell,” Delia said softly.

“Farewell.” Linley looked at Delia.

Delia stood there for a moment before slowly leaving the courtyard. After she walked outside, she turned to look back at Linley. It was already growing dark, and there wasn’t much light. As Delia turned to look at Linley, her hair was

swept up by the night wind.

A dazzling smile, and then she left.

Watching this beauty depart into the night, Linley stood there without moving, thinking who knows what.

“Big Bro, what are you looking at?” Wharton walked over, laughing. “It is time for dinner.”

“Your Big Bro feels the stirrings of spring!” Bebe’s little head popped up from behind Linley.

Night descended, but the entire imperial capital was filled with lights. Right now, in the imperial palace, a huge banquet had been prepared, and the palace musicians were performing beautiful songs. Men and women were displaying their graceful dance steps in the middle of the hall.

Delia was seated in a seat next to a wall of the main hall. Next to her was the Wildthunder Stormhawk. She was the guest of honor today. After all, this banquet was for the sake of welcoming her.

But aside from exchanging a few polite words with Emperor Johann, and singing a few words to a beautiful song, Delia claimed that she wasn’t feeling well and went off to one side to rest.

A handsome young noble walked over to Delia, a smile that he probably thought was friendly on his face. Bowing slightly, he said, “Beautiful Ms. Delia, might I have the honor of asking you to a dance?”

“I’m sorry, I’m not feeling very well.” Delia shook her head.

The young noble left regretfully. Not feeling well? Who was she trying to fool? Many girls who didn’t want to accept an offer to dance would say this. What’s more, Delia was a magus of the seventh rank. How could she so easily become ill?

From afar, quite a few young nobles were staring at Delia.

“What number is he?” Scott laughed towards a nearby young noble.

“The eighth.” The young noble laughed.

“The eighth what?” Marquis Jeff, who had just finished a dance, laughed as he walked over. Right now, Marquis Jeff was in a splendid mood.

Indeed, as Marquis Jeff was the son of Prince Julin. As his heir, Marquis Jeff would one day be the controller of the entire Southeast Administrative Province! His status was very high, even higher than a prince who wasn't in line for the imperial throne. Naturally, many young noble ladies were desirous of becoming his wife.

Unfortunately, although many young noble ladies had been bedded by Marquis Jeff, none of them had gotten anything.

“I was talking with his Imperial Highness regarding Ms. Delia. This is already the eighth person to ask Ms. Delia to dance, only to be refused. It seems the others have lost confidence. No one else dares to go invite her.” The young noble laughed.

Scott laughingly looked at Marquis Jeff. “What, cousin Jeff, do you wish to try?”

Marquis Jeff nodded confidently. “It's just a dance, right? Watch me.” Marquis Jeff smiled as he walked over towards Delia, smiled quite brightly.

“Ms. Delia.” Marquis Jeff walked in front of her. “Might I have the honor of asking you to a dance?”

“I'm sorry. I'm not feeling well.” Delia gave the same response.

Marquis Jeff very naturally sat down next to her, maintaining a practiced degree of distance between the two of them. Although the distance between the two wasn't very far, it wasn't so close as to be threatening.

“If you aren't feeling well, you should rest.” Marquis Jeff, being quite experienced, knew exactly how he should approach this sort of situation. If one was able to get into physical contact with a girl, it would be easier for the two to feel more intimate with each other.

As to how to get into physical contact...

“Oh, Ms. Delia, your shoulder has some...” As he spoke, Marquis Jeff reached out with his hand towards Delia's shoulder.

But before he could get the word 'dust' out of his mouth...

"Ah!!!" Marquis Jeff let out an agonized scream. That scream stunned the main hall, and everyone turned to look at him. Even the distant Emperor Johann, who was chatting with the Imperial Left Premier, had their attention drawn to them.

"What just happened?" Emperor Johann immediately walked over.

"My hand! My hand!" Marquis Jeff was almost crying. A large wound had appeared on his hand, and a large chunk of flesh was missing. Blood was flowing nonstop, staining the floor.

Delia hurriedly stood up. "Emperor Johann, my apologies. Teacher instructed his Wildthunder Stormhawk to protect me. The Wildthunder Stormhawk will attack anything that touches my body in a manner it deems threatening. Before I even had a chance to react, the Wildthunder Stormhawk immediately pecked at him."

Everyone looked at the Wildthunder Stormhawk.

The Wildthunder Stormhawk was dangling a chunk of flesh off its beak, which was stained with blood. The Wildthunder Stormhawk swallowed that chunk of flesh in one gulp, then stared death at Marquis Jeff with its two golden hawk eyes.

The Anticipation of the Crowd

“The Wildthunder Stormhawk will attack anything which touches my body in a manner it deems threatening.” These words seemed very simple, but all of the nobles present were extremely intelligent. They immediately realized what had happened when they heard Delia say this.

All of the nobles turned to stare at Marquis Jeff, who was currently clutching his wounded hand. His face was pale and very ugly to behold.

“This Marquis Jeff actually tried to make a physical move on her. Jeeze...” Many nobles secretly cursed him in silence. Although they didn’t speak aloud, it was only natural that their gazes would convey their thoughts. Marquis Jeff felt extremely awkward.

Emperor Johann glanced at his nephew with dissatisfaction as well.

He knew that the Wildthunder Stormhawk behind Delia was a magical beast of the ninth rank belonging to her wind-style Grand Magus Saint teacher, Master Longhaus. Most likely, Delia really was unable to react to the Wildthunder Stormhawk’s attack on Marquis Jeff, and in turn the Wildthunder Stormhawk was unable to speak with Delia.

A situation like this most likely wasn’t a result of Delia intentionally acting against Marquis Jeff.

Indeed...

Delia hadn’t intentionally acted against Marquis Jeff. Before arriving at the banquet, Delia had already told the Wildthunder Stormhawk that if anyone wished to try and make a physical move on her, the Wildthunder Stormhawk was to ‘peck’ them in punishment.

None of the other young nobles had dared to make a physical move on her, but Marquis Jeff did. Naturally, he was the one who took the spear in the belly.

“Attend me! Take Jeff to the healers,” Emperor Johann snapped an order to his servants.

Marquis Jeff didn’t try to explain, only hanging his head while holding his hand, with that astonishingly large hole in it. He rapidly left the main hall. Only then did Emperor Johann say comfortingly to Delia, “Ms. Delia, sincere apologies that you had to experience something like this. This was our fault. We hope you won’t be too upset.”

“No, no. Emperor Johann, this was Little Wind’s mistake. When I go back, I’ll definitely ask Teacher to rebuke him.” As she spoke, she intentionally ‘glared’ at the Wildthunder Stormhawk.

And then, Delia said apologetically, “Emperor Johann, I’m not feeling very well today. I’ll go home now. I hope you will forgive me.”

“That’s a good idea. Ms. Delia, when you get back, you need to have a good rest,” Emperor Johann said in a very gentlemanly manner.

With the guest of honor, Delia, having left, the other nobles began to buzz and chatter. Poor Marquis Jeff, naturally, became the center of their gossip.

After this event and after having his wound healed by light magic, Marquis Jeff actually fearlessly and shamelessly went to serve as a ‘guide’ for Delia, and Eighth Imperial Prince Scott accompanied him as well.

But unfortunately...

Although Ms. Delia was very friendly, those two magical beasts were terrifying.

Once, when Ms. Delia stumbled while walking, as she was about to fall, Prince Scott reached out with ‘good intentions’ to help steady Delia by embracing her. Welcoming him, however, was a peck from the Wildthunder Stormhawk. This time, the injury was even more severe than Marquis Jeff’s, as a hole was pecked straight through Prince Scott’s right hand.

After this experience, both Scott and Marquis Jeff learned their lessons and no longer dared to reach out with their hands. But just as they thought they were being nice and proper, misfortune came again.

That Worldbear suddenly stretched out its two palms and sent both Scott and Marquis Jeff flying into the air.

How terrifyingly strong were the paws of a Worldbear? Even a casual slap from the Worldbear was enough to injure Scott and Marquis Jeff to the point of vomiting blood. They were beaten to the brink of death, but fortunately, light-style magi were there to heal them.

This is what the Worldbear, Hatton, said to them: “You two keep swaggering around every day in front of me, Lord Hatton. You are so motherfucking annoying. In the future, every time I see you, I’ll beat you!”

Good heavens!

Who would dare anger a Saint-level Worldbear? Even for the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, defeating a Worldbear wouldn’t be a simple task. After all, a Worldbear was definitely a top-class magical beast, even amongst Saint-level magical beasts. If it hadn’t been that Master Longhaus’ Dimensional Edge spell was simply too terrifyingly powerful, how could he possibly have subdued such a creature?

Having learned their lessons, Scott and Marquis Jeff no longer dared to bother Ms. Delia again.

Those other young nobles of the imperial capital who had ambitious designs on Ms. Delia, seeing the disasters that had befallen Marquis Jeff and Prince Scott, no longer dared to try anything. There was nothing for it. If they were swatted to death by that Saint-level Worldbear, they wouldn’t even have a chance to cry.

Emperor Johann, while chatting with Delia, finally learned that Delia had actually been classmates of the same year with Master Linley at the Ernst Institute. In addition, Delia was in no hurry to return to the Yulan Empire, and was planning to stay and watch the duel in the O’Brien Empire between Linley and the Monolithic Sword Saint.

Emperor Johann naturally was very welcoming and magnanimous.

Although a stay of several months from a foreign Special Envoy was quite long, Emperor Johann expressed welcome to her, saying that the longer she

stayed, the better.

Time passed, and in the blink of an eye, nearly three months had passed. Tomorrow was August 4th. Countless people in the imperial capital were discussing the upcoming Saint-level duel. Even the towns outside the imperial capital were beginning to fill up with people who had come from distant places.

This was because there were simply too many people coming to watch this duel. The imperial capital was thoroughly full.

On Boulder Street. Count Wharton's estate. Hillman and Housekeeper Hiri were drinking wine and chatting idly.

"Uncle Hiri, have you noticed that recently, at mealtime, Linley smiles a lot more than usual, and often cracks jokes." Hillman's face was all smiles.

Housekeeper Hiri's ruddy nose was as red as ever. He chortled as well. "Hillman, I imagine you know the reason why as well. Ms. Delia comes to visit young master Linley every day. How can young master Linley not be happy? As I see it, this Ms. Delia is a fine young lady. And I feel that Ms. Delia is interested in young master Linley."

"Right. When Ms. Delia eats with us, I recognize that look in her eyes when she looks at young master Linley," Hillman spoke with the air of experience.

Hillman and Housekeeper Hiri were both quite satisfied with Delia.

However...

"But young master Linley himself always dodges this topic. I've raised it with him several times." Hillman shook his head helplessly.

"No rush. As long as both of them are willing, when the time is right, they'll definitely get together." Housekeeper Hiri was actually quite confident.

Right at this time, Wharton, Barker, and his siblings all came from the back courtyard's training fields. Those six massive bodies formed an amazing sight.

"Grandpa Hiri. Uncle Hillman," Wharton called out to them from far away.

As soon as Wharton entered the living room. "Eh? My Big Brother and Ms. Delia haven't arrived yet." Right now, every day, Delia would come have lunch with Linley.

“They’ll be here soon. Don’t be impatient,” Hillman said.

“They’re here.” Gates, who was at the back, turned his head and saw Linley walk in alongside Delia, both dressed in light blue robes. The Blackcloud Panther, Haeru, was behind them, while Bebe was standing on Haeru’s back.

Both dressed in light blue robes, the natural, at-ease Linley and the beautiful, moving Delia did appear to be a match made in heaven indeed.

“Big Bro, time to eat. You’re still busy chatting? Don’t you think you’ve chatted enough?” Wharton’s loud voice boomed out.

Linley and Delia looked at Wharton, and Wharton laughed while shaking his head.

Yulan calendar, year 10009. August 4th. Afternoon. Today, the weather was excellent. The sky was pure blue, with only a few clouds in the sky. The wind wasn’t too strong, and the soft wind gently blew comfortably against everyone’s faces, as gentle as the caress of a lover’s hand.



*

West of the city. Mt. Tujiao!

This was a small mountain that was only around a thousand meters high, and a few thousand square meters in area. It wasn’t a large mountain. Compared to War God Mountain, it was far smaller. Today, however, the area surrounding the mountain had already been divided into countless regions by various painted lines. Over a hundred thousand city guards were there maintaining order as well.

There was an extremely high number of spectators here today, even more than during that last duel between Olivier and Haydson. Although many people had come, with those millions of people all divided into one region after another, it was quite orderly, with each region having an army regiment standing guard.

Mt. Tujiao didn’t have any people on the mountain itself. But in the air above Mt. Tujiao, Linley stood in mid-air!

Even the nobles stood several hundred meters away from the base of Mt. Tujiao, with the city guards maintaining a perimeter.

Wharton, Barker, and his brothers naturally were in the front, quite close to Emperor Johann. As for Delia and Master Longhaus, they were quite close to Wharton's group.

Wharton and Delia both raised their heads, staring at Linley's figure with concern.

"My Big Bro will definitely win," Wharton murmured silently to himself.

Master Longhaus gently patted Delia on her shoulders. Delia looked towards her teacher, her eyes slightly red. Delia felt tremendous mental pressure.

"It'll be fine. Linley will be fine," Master Longhaus said comfortingly.

"He definitely will be fine," Delia said softly to herself, as she looked up towards Mt. Tujiao again.

"Fuck, why hasn't that Haydson come yet?" Gates cursed angrily. He didn't care about the Monolithic Sword Saint at all, and cursed as he pleased.

Right now, Wharton, Housekeeper Hiri, Hillman, Delia, Barker and his brothers, Jenne, Rebecca, and Leena... all of them were quietly hoping and praying for Linley's victory.

"For Linley to win will be very hard." A gray-robed figure suddenly appeared next to them.

"Olivier?" Wharton and Gates stared at this man in astonishment.

Olivier had come back to life!

Olivier's face was ashen pale, but his aura was even more restrained than before. Blumer was standing by his side. Olivier glanced at Wharton, then said calmly, "That Haydson's defense is extremely powerful, and his attack force is very astonishing as well. You should remember how when I fought him, my arm broke from aiming a single sword blow at him. His strength far exceeds mine. In addition, his spiritual energy is very powerful, and he is also very fast... he is essentially flawless. Beating him will be hard."

"Olivier, our Lord is not you," Gates said unhappily.

Olivier laughed calmly and fell silent. He walked with his younger brother to a different area, quietly awaiting the coming battle.

“Lord Haydson has arrived!” A surprised shout came from somewhere within that endless sea of humanity.

Everyone turned to stare at a figure that was flying over at high speed from the east. In the blink of an eye, Haydson appeared in the air above Mt. Tujiao, standing opposite from Linley.

Right now, Linley and Haydson were only a thousand meters off the ground.

The dwellers of the Yulan continent all had good eyesight. In broad daylight, they could clearly make out these two figures who were a thousand meters away.

Delia’s hands were balled into tight fists, and her palms were sweaty.

At this moment, none of the millions of spectators surrounding Mt. Tujiao made any noise. It seemed as though they were all holding their breaths, as they all felt an incredible pressure.

Everyone’s gaze was fixed on those two figures high up in the air.

“Linley, you arrived rather early,” Haydson said casually as he stood in mid-air.

Linley just looked at him calmly. A gentle wind surrounded him. Linley was currently in his human form. The reason he was able to fly was because he had already utilized the wind spell of the ninth rank, Windshadow.

The Soaring Technique was a spell of the seventh rank, while the Airwings spell was a spell of the eighth rank. The Windshadow spell of the ninth rank combined the Airwings spell with the Supersonic spell. When using this spell, not only could one fly, one would also possess astonishing speed.

Linley casually removed his outer garments, collecting them into his interspatial ring, then stared coldly at Haydson. “Haydson, let’s cut the crap. Prepare to fight,” As he spoke, Linley’s body quickly began to be covered with black scales, and those sharp spikes appeared from his elbows, knees, forehead, and spine. That iron-whip-like tail swung about behind him, and those dark gold

eyes stared coldly at Haydson.

“Oh, how refreshingly blunt. Come, then... let’s see if you are qualified to make me draw my sword!” The Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, looked at Linley with confidence, and he laughed calmly as he spoke in a bright voice.

Desperate

Linley and Haydson stood there in mid-air, staring at each other from over a few hundred meters apart. Naturally, they used battle-qi to speak to each other, and their voices were very loud. The viewers below could hear their words clearly.

“How arrogant!” Wharton frowned.

“Fuck his granny, when his Lordship beats him to the point of being unable to fight back, this Haydson will know how ignorant and sheltered he is,” Gates cursed unhappily.

Although most of the spectators below felt Haydson was arrogant, they also knew... that Haydson had the power to be arrogant. After all, he was the Monolithic Sword Saint, famous for his defense!

In mid-air.

The Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, finished his words, and the area around him became covered with those earthen swirls of energy. The density of that roiling energy had reached a terrifying density and power.

“Force you to draw your sword?” Linley’s lips curved upwards.

“Bang!” A dense azurish-black battle-qi exploded forth from Linley’s body, surrounding Linley like a thick black swirling fog. But compared to Haydson’s, the protective energy around Linley actually made one’s heart rate change. It contained within it some sort of strange vibrational pulse.

“Oh?” Staring at Linley’s Pulseguard Defense, Haydson’s eyes lit up. He immediately stared carefully at Linley and laughed, “Linley, I didn’t realize that when you dueled with Olivier, you had been hiding this ability. I confess... you are qualified to make me draw my sword.”

Haydson was extremely experienced.

Although Linley's Pulseguard Defense was different from his, the power of his defense was definitely not any inferior than Haydson's. Just based on this astonishing defensive power, Haydson had to draw his sword!

"Clang!" Haydson drew his earthen colored heavy sword from the sheath on his back, staring steadily at Linley.

With a flip of his hand, that adamantine heavy sword appeared in his hands, glowing with that faint blue light. He immediately adopted a ready position, prepared to deliver a fierce blow at any moment.

"He drew his sword. Lord Haydson drew his sword."

The heartbeats of the millions of spectators increased in speed. Olivier frowned. "Linley's defense. It seems... to be rather special. I didn't expect that he had been hiding this ability."

Delia was so nervous that her forehead was covered with sweat, but she didn't notice it at all.

One was surrounded by earth-colored energy, while the other was surrounded by azurish-black energy. The Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, looked like a wargod of the earth, while Linley looked like a demon from another dimension, making those who saw him feel fear.

"Careful!" Linley let out a cold shout, then he moved.

"Boom!" The gentle wind suddenly transformed into a howling tempest that filled the skies. Linley's body suddenly blurrily merged with the wind which began to blow around the entire Mt. Tujiao. "Crack!" A tree was shattered in half by the force of the wind, and many other trees began to bend as well. Leaves were blown everywhere into the sky, and countless leaves and pebbles were swirling about in the air above Mt. Tujiao.

Everyone below scrunched their eyes, carefully watching this oncoming battle.

"He's actually reached such a high level of understanding with regards to the Elemental Laws of the Wind." The wind-style Grand Magus Saint, Longhaus, sighed quietly in praise as his eyes lit up.

The others all watched the battle with baited breath.

The Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, wielding his earthen heavy sword in his hands, stood arrogantly in mid-air. He seemed as stable as a mountain, despite the wind howling about him. Linley's body could be blurrily seen at multiple places throughout that wild wind.

"Hooooowl!"

Suddenly, a bizarre, bestial howl could be heard as a black blur suddenly charged towards Haydson. Haydson's face changed. Linley's speed was simply too fast. Because his speed had reached a certain limit, the wind itself had howled in rage.

The only thing Haydson saw was Linley's two dark golden eyes. They stared at each other.

"Hrmph!" Haydson wasn't afraid at all.

"Haaaaaaaargh!"

"Haaaaaaaargh!"

Two angry roars rang out at the same time. The adamantine heavy sword howled with the wind, carrying tremendous force as it chopped down towards Haydson. But Haydson's earthen heavy sword seemed to carry the force of a mountain as it swung towards Linley.

The two swords collided!

"BANG!!!"

It was as though two mountains had collided. The terrifying power of that collision produced waves of energy that one could see with the naked eye. Those waves of energy were knife-sharp, and the trees directly beneath the battle on Mt. Tujiao were split apart. Some boulders were chopped into rubble, while countless rocks and pebbles blasted in all directions.

"Your Imperial Majesty, careful!"

A boulder actually smashed down directly towards Emperor Johann's direction. Immediately, warriors charged towards it, kicking that ten thousand-pound boulder away. One powerful warrior after another protected each of the

nobles. Many of the spectators were powerful warriors, and some were magi.

“Everyone, be careful!” Those spectators were all stunned.

This power was simply too terrifying.

“Linley!” Seeing Linley’s Dragonblood Warrior transformation and his astonishing strength, Delia felt pride for the person she was in love with.

Linley and Haydson both retreated nearly a hundred meters.

“What astonishing strength.” Linley felt shocked. When he had dueled against Olivier, Linley had only used Bloodviolet and therefore had not shown off his incredible strength. After all, Dragonblood Warriors were famous for their strength! When using the adamantine heavy sword, he was able to put his terrifying, earth-shaking power on full display.

“Dragonblood Warriors live up to their reputation as Supreme Warriors.” Haydson laughed loudly. “But Linley, just now, I only used pure strength and none of the Laws. You need to be careful of my next attack.”

For example, that ‘Worldbreaker’ attack Haydson had used last time contained the insights he had gained into the Laws of the Earth.

The power of that attack had increased tremendously as a result.

“With my next technique, I too shall use my Profound Truths of the Earth. You be careful as well.” Linley looked calmly at the distant Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson.

In this battle, he definitely couldn’t hold anything back. If he held back but the opponent didn’t, he would probably die.

“His Lordship is about to use the Profound Truths of the Earth.” Barker, his brothers, and Wharton all grew nervous. Bebe and Haeru both exchanged glances. Haeru had shrunken his size dramatically today, which was very rare for him.

“Swoosh!”

While everyone stared upwards into the sky, Bebe and Haeru scurried towards Mt. Tujiao, moving as fast as lightning. These two magical beasts quickly arrived at the tip of Mt. Tujiao, and in the blink of an eye, Bebe and

Haeru hid within some of the wild grass at the mountain top.

“We’ll watch from here. If the Boss wins, that’s fine. If the Boss loses and that Haydson continues to go full force on him, then it’ll be time for us to charge.” Bebe stared evilly at the mid-air Haydson.

Haeru nodded as well.

Last time, Olivier had nearly lost his life. Haeru and Bebe didn’t want to see that scene repeat itself.

Linley was wielding the adamantine heavy sword while the battle-qi in his body began to rise rapidly, and his power quickly grew. The Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, was building his power as well.

The two experts were preparing to use their ultimate techniques.

“Boom!” “Boom!”

Terrifying sonic booms rang out as two blurs slashed through the air. In the blink of an eye, those two experts slammed into each other like two massive colliding meteors.

“Profound Truths of the Earth – Hundred Layered Waves!” Linley’s dark golden eyes grew even colder, and his adamantine heavy sword floated as agilely as a soft breeze, having attained a bizarrely fast speed, as though it was passing through reality itself.

“Worldquake!” Haydon’s face was very solemn, and the light covering his earthen heavy sword grew even more concentrated, and the heavens and the earth in the area around them began to congeal and solidify.

“Bang!”

The earthen heavy sword collided against the adamantine heavy sword. This collision was very strange. Linley was smashed downwards from the skies like a meteor, falling downwards at extreme speed. Only after falling several hundred meters did he manage to somersault and then halt his descent.

Linley could sense that the flow of blood in his body had been disrupted and was roiling about.

“What terrifying attack power.” Linley stared in amazement at the mid-air

Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson. Linley's Pulseguard Defense was extremely powerful, several dozen times more powerful than the normal battle-qi armor that protected most Saints. Such a terrifying defense was generally immune to the attacks of most Law-based techniques of peak-stage Saints.

Linley's defense was not one bit weaker than Haydson's.

But despite that, Haydson's Worldquake technique was simply too terrifying. It was as though the weight of an entire enormous mountain had concentrated itself onto Haydson's sword as it chopped down against Linley. It had broken through Linley's Pulseguard Defense, exhausting the majority of its power as it did so, but Linley was just barely able to defend against that remaining amount of power via his draconic scales.

"This Monolithic Sword Saint's attack power actually contains a hint of similarity to my Profound Truths of the Earth." Linley could sense that Haydson's Worldquake technique actually carried a bit of vibrational power as well; only, there was but a single vibrational wave.

A single vibrational wave was only capable of causing the blood in Linley's body to be roiled and disturbed.

"His insight into the Throbbing Pulse of the World is quite low."

The Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, didn't actually focus on the Throbbing Pulse of the World when training in the Laws of the Earth. He had gone a different way.

"I imagine Haydson isn't feeling too well right now either." Linley stared upwards at Haydson.

"Urgh!" Haydson's body trembled, a hint of blood leaking out from his lips as he stared down at Linley in astonishment.

When the adamantine heavy sword had intersected with his earthen heavy sword, at first he hadn't felt any force at all. But then, a strange vibration passed into his body through the sword, and Haydson felt as though countless warhammer-like blows were smashing into his internals. In the blink of an eye, he had been struck by a hundred vibrations.

"Fortunately, I've reached a certain degree of mastery into the 'Massive'

aspect of the Laws of the Earth, which fortified both my soul and my internals. Otherwise... this attack by itself probably would've taken my life."

Haydson's defense was very powerful indeed.

Not only was his external defense formidable, his spirit and his internal organs were protected as well. After all, the earth was the mother to us all. The path Haydson had chosen was a path of extreme defense and extreme offensive power.

If Linley had used fifty layered vibrational waves to attack Haydson, he probably wouldn't have been able to injure Haydson at all. But Linley had used the Hundred Layered Waves attack. No matter how strong Haydson's defense had been, he had still been injured.

One stood in mid-air above Mt. Tujiao. The other stood in mid-air, halfway down Mt. Tujiao. The two stared at each other, both sensing how powerful the other was.

"What a terrifying attack." Haydson felt terror in his heart. This was the first time he had experienced such a bizarre attack.

"What astonishing defense, and what terrifying strength." Linley, seeing that the opponent had received his 'Hundred Layered Waves' head on without dying, also felt stunned.

Below them was a sea of silence. Nobody knew what the result had been between this clash of experts.

"Haha... Linley, wonderful. You are the first Saint to cause me to be heavily injured," Haydson's voice rang out brightly, but then it grew seriously. "But now, I'll no longer hold back anything. Prepare to receive my Worldbreaker attack. If you die, don't blame me!"

Watching from below, Olivier's face changed. Last time, it had been the Worldbreaker technique that had nearly taken his life.

The Worldbreaker technique was far more terrifying than the Worldquake technique.

"It remains to be seen who shall be the one to die!" Linley said coldly, his

voice also ringing in the skies.

In truth, Linley had already reached the level of being able to generate 132 layers of waves. Just then, Linley had only utilized the Hundred Layered Waves, but that wasn't Linley's limit.

“Boom!”

“Boom!”

Two sonic booms once more split the air, as these two ultimate experts charged towards each other in mid-air. One flew upwards at high speed, while the other charged downwards. These two experts collided with tremendous force at the outskirts of Mt. Tujiao.

Worldbreaker!

Profound Truths of the Earth – 132 Layered Waves!

The absolute most powerful attacks of these two experts!

“Bang!” Linley's body was actually slammed into the side of Mt. Tujiao itself, creating a giant crater. “Crack!” “Crack!” Instantly, the entire mountain began to crack, and with a rumbling noise, countless boulders began to fall and trees began to split apart. As the boulders came tumbling down towards them, many of the spectators below immediately began to block them.

“Boom!” Linley came charging out from within the deep crater. His body was stained with blood, and even parts of his draconic scales were shattered.

The power of the Worldbreaker technique was many times higher than the Worldquake technique. Linley had taken this attack head on, but despite being protected by two layers of defense, the Pulseguard Defense and his draconic scales, he had still been heavily wounded and vomited blood.

“Paaargh!”

Haydson's throat convulsed, and he vomited out a large mouthful of fresh blood, his face instantly turning white. Both of these mighty Saints were now covered with blood.

The battle had reached a desperate point!

Astonishment

The millions of spectators below were stunned. Haydson had vomited blood, while Linley's shattered scales were covered with bloodstains. Clearly, this battle was growing extremely desperate.

"How is this possible?"

"How is this possible... Master Linley and Lord Haydson..."

The countless spectators were all stunned. These two dominating experts had actually battled to such a point. What was truly shocking was... the reputed most powerful of Saints, Haydson, had vomited a large mouthful of blood. Clearly he had been deeply injured.

As they saw it, Linley was only twenty-seven, despite being a genius.

But wasn't Linley previously just on par with Olivier? Olivier had been defeated by Haydson, and Linley should've suffered the same fate. But clearly, the results were totally different.

"Linley, he..." Olivier's forehead was locked into a frown. He fell silent.

Actually, if Linley hadn't gained insight into his Pulseguard Defense, most likely the Worldquake technique of Haydson would have badly injured him, and the Worldbreaker should have directly killed him. But now that Linley had his Pulseguard Defense, his protective abilities were extremely high. Even when Haydson used his ultimate technique, he could only badly injure Linley at most.

"Linley!" Delia was at the point of tears.

Especially when she saw Linley's body covered with bloodstains, her heart quivered.

"Big Bro." "Lord!" Wharton, the Barker brothers, Housekeeper Hiri, Hillman, Jenne and the other girls... all of them were worried for Linley.

The battle had truly reached a desperate state.

“What a bizarre attack. There is no way to defend against it at all.” Haydson stared at the distant, demonic-looking Linley, thinking at high speed.

Profound Truths of the Earth – 132 Layered Waves!

Even Haydson, whose internal organs were under special protection, had been heavily injured. Haydson knew very well that he could perhaps endure a single additional blow from his opponent’s ultimate attack, but if he were to be hit a third time, he would definitely perish.

“How could Linley’s defense be so powerful? My Worldbreaker attack was unable to kill him.” Haydson couldn’t believe it.

He hadn’t met any opponent who would dare take his attack head on. The Worldbreaker was his ultimate attack. If he wasn’t capable of killing his opponent with it, how would he win?

“I can’t take another one head on. I’ll have to rely on my speed to try and avoid his attack while landing mine on him,” Haydson decided. He believed that Linley wouldn’t be much better off than him. It was already incredible that Linley would still be battle-worthy after having taken his Worldbreaker attack. He trusted that so long as he was able to land another Worldbreaker, Linley definitely wouldn’t be able to take it.

Haydson’s thoughts were actually mirrored by Linley’s own.

Given his current condition, he definitely couldn’t take another attack head on.

“Shudder...” The earthen flows of energy surrounding Haydson began to contract, forming a thinner, almost armor-like layer around him.

Linley was also retracting the area of his Pulseguard Defense.

If the defense was too spread out, their high-speed flying maneuvers would be impacted. Without question, for both experts to do this meant that they were about to engage in a battle of agility.

The countless spectators below all stared in the sky, barely breathing.

Those people who had been absolutely certain that the Monolithic Sword

Saint, Haydson, would win, no longer dared to say anything anymore.

“Whoosh!” “Whoosh!” Hurricane-like winds once more split the sky open, and Linley’s body once again began to move in that graceful, bizarre manner. His speed had reached its absolute limit. Relying on the force of the wind, Linley’s movements were extremely bizarre and completely unpredictable.

Wielding his earthen heavy sword, Haydson moved as well. With each step he took, he seemed to teleport, traversing tens of meters. His movements were bizarre as well!

“Swiish.”

Haydson’s earthen heavy sword suddenly appeared in front of Linley, chopping down at him. But it passed through ‘Linley’ as though Linley was nothing but air. This ‘Linley’ turned into a blur and disappeared. It was just an after-image.

“Swish!” The adamantite heavy sword struck out as well.

But as it neared Haydson’s body, Haydson suddenly appeared several dozen meters away.

Both of these experts knew how formidable the other’s attacks were. They didn’t dare to take them head on, and they all desired to use their agility to allow themselves to deliver a vicious blow towards their opponent.

“Where are they?”

“We can’t even see them!”

Those countless viewers stared carefully at the skies, but Linley and Haydson were simply moving too fast. With the wind howling as ferociously as it was, they could only occasionally see a solid blur.

Delia’s forehead was covered in sweat, but she still stared unblinkingly at the heavens.

The atmosphere was incredibly tense!

With a single step, Haydson appeared at the top of Mt. Tujiao. Haydson had decided to use the boulders and trees of Mt. Tujiao to serve as cover and restrict Linley’s speed.

“Whoosh!”

Linley charged downwards at high speed, heading straight towards Haydson.

With a single step, Haydson moved a great distance, and with a second step, he appeared behind a giant boulder. Linley was currently located on the opposite side of the boulder.

“Worldbreaker!”

The earthen heavy sword chopped down with boundless power. That man-sized boulder split apart as easily as tofu, shattering into pebbles as soon as the energy surrounding the heavy sword touched it. Linley, however, had already retreated at high speed, having sensed that the situation had turned dangerous.

“Bang!”

The entire Mt. Tujiao suddenly had a terrifying large crack that was hundreds of meters long appear in the mountain itself, with the crack three or four meters wide. Countless stones rained down in every direction.

“God!” The millions of spectators were stunned.

They saw how, before their very eyes, an enormous crack had appeared in the mountain itself. The thousand-meter-tall mountain had been half-split!

“Boom!” Linley struck out once more with his Profound Truths of the Earth – 132 Layered Waves, chopping at Haydson.

Haydson once more dodged.

Linley’s heavy sword struck on a nearby tree. “Rumble.” With a bizarre sound, the tree turned into dust, while at the same time, the vibrations from the adamantine heavy sword’s chop travelled in a straight line from the top of the mountain to the center of the mountain, and then expanded outwards.

“Rumble...”

In the middle of the mountain, a man-sized tunnel began to appear, and countless crushed rocks came flowing out from within it. Those rocks had been completely crushed to dust, to the point where they floated upwards into the wind, covering the entire mountain with dust.

In the blink of an eye...

A tunnel that passed straight from the top of the mountain to the center of the mountain could clearly be seen by the countless spectators.

The countless spectators were deathly quiet.

Emperor Johann's throat clenched twice.

Good heavens. What sort of terrifying power was this? Who could possibly withstand a single blow from these two? One sword split half the mountain, while the other bore a tunnel straight through it, turning the stone into dust. This was simply inconceivable.

"That's the Profound Truths of the Earth!" Barker and the others were excited, but at the same time, they were alarmed by the astonishing power of the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson.

Olivier silently watched everything.

The wind blew wildly. Linley, hiding his body within the wind, would constantly appear in multiple places. As for Haydson, he continued to dodge nonstop in that bizarre method. The spectators below only heard those nonstop powerful exploding sounds, followed by the sound of boulders splitting apart and trees either exploding or disintegrating.

"Boom!" Part of the mountain peak was actually split off and sent flying downwards. Tumbling down the mountainside, countless trees were split apart in its path, and the spectators below began to cry in alarm.

Kenyon of the War God's College, one of the spectating Saints, immediately went forward. With a sweep of his sturdy staff, he borrowed the force of the titanic rock and sent it flying towards an empty space at the base of the mountain. Only then did the nearly hundred-meter-wide rock roll away.

"Retreat! Retreat!"

The soldiers of the army immediately issued orders, directing the spectators to begin retreating. The imperial clan and the nobles began to retreat as well. Good heavens, this battle was far more than they had thought it would be. At such a close distance, it would be simply too dangerous.

Everyone began to retreat.

Linley and Haydson's battle grew more and more frantic and more and more reckless. With just three or four full force sword chops, Haydson had all but chopped the entire Mt. Tujiao into several pieces, while Linley's attacks were causing Mt. Tujiao to split apart. Soon...

"Rumble..."

Mt. Tujiao simply couldn't sustain the damage anymore. The utterly ravaged Mt. Tujiao collapsed, sending countless amounts of dust flying everywhere. The spectators immediately began to retreat, frightened. Fortunately, they had already retreated earlier, and they had multiple Saints protecting them.

After the dust and rubble settled down, a field of rubble roughly two or three hundred meters high appeared in front of them.

Mt. Tujiao was gone!

All that was left was an enormous pile of rubble!

"Good heavens!" The countless spectators stared at the two people standing above the rubble. Linley and Haydson were both covered with blood, and their faces were pale. But their auras were still incredibly fierce.

None of the viewers would ever be able to forget this battle. Regardless of who would be the winner or who would die, they wouldn't think for an instant that the loser was weak or had performed poorly.

"Linley, you lose!" Haydson stared coldly at Linley.

Linley's dark golden eyes stared silently at Haydson.

"Even after you Dragonform, your battle-qi is weaker than mine. After such a long, exhausting battle, your speed has already begun to slow down," Haydson said confidently.

Indeed.

In his human form, Linley was only of the ninth rank, and after Dragonforming, his battle-qi was only at the level of a mid-stage Saint. But Haydson was someone who had trained for centuries. His reservoir of battle-qi was far deeper than Linley's. After such a vigorous battle, Linley's battle-qi was

almost empty. Without sufficient battle-qi to support him, his speed naturally would decrease.

Haydson's lips curved up.

"Boom!" Haydson suddenly moved. An explosive sonic boom could be heard as Haydson charged forward at high speed, while Linley also dodged at high speed, relying on his powerful Dragonform as well as the support of the Windshadow spell.

But with his battle-qi almost all gone, Linley's speed was now slower than Haydson's.

"Worldbreaker!" Sensing his chance, Haydson aimed a final blow at Linley.

"Shkreeeeeech!" An ear-piercing, heart-shaking screech shook the heavens, while a vicious black shadow appeared from within the rubble and charged at high speed, appearing between Linley and Haydson.

At the same time, it expanded in size.

"Bebe." Linley was startled.

Bebe had transformed to be two meters tall and four meters long, while at the same time, he slammed his sharp claws viciously against that earthen heavy sword.

"Fuck off!" Bebe howled angrily.

"Boom!"

The earthen heavy sword and Bebe's sharp claws collided.

Haydson was knocked flying, and he spat out a mouthful of blood. As for Bebe, he too was knocked backwards by the terrifying power of that attack.

"Fuck, that hurts!" An angry howl.

Fast as lightning, Bebe once more appeared in front of Haydson. Despite having taken the Worldbreaker attack head on, Bebe's body only had a hint of blood on it. He hadn't suffered a severe injury at all.

Haydson had fallen onto the ground. Seeing this freak charge towards him, he had no idea where it had come from. All he knew was... if he didn't block, he

would die.

Haydson immediately jumped to his feet.

Where had this freak come from? It had taken his Worldbreaker blow head on without injury!

“Worldbreaker!” Haydson went all out to try and preserve his life.

“Bang!”

Bebe slammed both claws directly against the earthen heavy sword, sending it flying out of Haydson’s hands. Haydson was sent flying backwards as well, and fresh blood once more spewed forth from his lips as he fell heavily to the ground.

All of the onlookers were stunned, and their mouths gaped open.

“You want to kill my Boss? You wanna die?” Bebe howled angrily as he charged forward yet again.

“Bebe, stop,” Linley immediately shouted.

“Boss, what are you doing?” Bebe turned to look at Linley. Linley glanced at Haydson. After this duel, Linley knew that Haydson actually wouldn’t be a huge threat to him in the future.

Linley shook his head, then mentally said, “Bebe, forget it.”

Bebe was extremely dissatisfied. He jumped next to that earthen heavy sword, lifted it up, then put it into his mouth. “Crunch.” “Crunch.” With two crunching sounds, he actually devoured and swallowed that earthen heavy sword.

“I, Bebe, will spare your life. I’ll eat your little toy though. Consider this your punishment,” the giant Bebe said casually as he stared down at Haydson from mid-air with two cold eyes.

“How... how is that possible?” Haydson forced himself to his feet, staring in disbelief. His sword had been forged through an alloy of countless precious materials. It wasn’t much weaker than Linley’s adamantine heavy sword, but it had actually been eaten by this magical beast.”

“Master Linley, this... this magical beast?” Emperor Johann asked from afar.

Bebe turned to stare at Emperor Johann angrily. “What? My Boss is a magus. When a magus engages in a duel, it is very normal for him to bring his magical beast companions. Why can’t I help? I, Bebe, have already been quite forbearing, since Haeru hasn’t even come out yet. Otherwise, if my Boss, myself, and Haeru were to join forces, killing Haydson would’ve been as easy as eating that sword just now. Haeru, show yourself!”

“Groooooowl.” At this time, an angry growl could be heard as another magical beast came charging out of the rubble. It also began to grow in size. It was the Blackcloud Panther, Haeru. Haeru flew directly next to Bebe, standing in mid-air alongside Bebe as he glanced at Haydson.

Right now, both Linley and Haydson were badly injured.

But the distant, countless spectators were no longer paying any attention to them. Their attention was on these two Saint-level magical beasts that had suddenly appeared, especially that first one. The first one was too terrifying.

He had taken a hit from the Worldbreaker attack without any problems.

With a few crunchy chomps, he had eaten Haydson’s personal weapon.

“Hey, Haydson, you got any issues with that?” Bebe lowered his head to scowl at Haydson.

Seeing the cold light flashing in Bebe’s eyes, Haydson knew that if he were to protest strongly, Bebe would probably claw him to death. Even at full strength, it would be hard for him to win against a magical beast like Bebe, with such astonishing defense, attack, and speed. Much less now.

Haydson turned his head, maintaining his silence.

“Haydson, I admit that I lost this duel,” Linley said.

Haydson glanced at Linley. In his heart, he was beginning to admire Linley. “Linley, today, actually, the two of us fought to a draw. I was able to rely on my deeper reservoir of battle-qi to take a slight advantage. As for your magical beast...”

Haydson glanced at Haeru, then looked at Bebe.

Bebe immediately stared at him. Haydson laughed bitterly. “Your magical beast is the most terrifying Saint-level magical beast I have ever seen.” Hearing these words, Bebe raised his little head up arrogantly.

Fame Spreading Far

With a flip of his hand, Linley retrieved a long robe from his interspatial ring. He returned to his human form, then put on the long robe. With a calm laugh, he said, “Bebe, Haeru, let’s go back.” At the same time, Linley looked at Haydson. The Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, was looking at him as well.

Both Haydson and Linley’s faces were rather pale. After this duel, both of them had suffered severe injuries, internal injuries.

These two ultimate experts both nodded slightly. And then Haydson, paying no attention to anyone else, rose into the air and flew away towards the east. He transformed into a blurred black dot, then disappeared into the eastern horizons.

Linley walked in front, with Bebe and Haeru, his two Saint-level magical beasts, behind him.

Seeing the man and his two magical beasts, Emperor Johann, Kenyon, Lanke and the others all felt great pressure. Linley and his two Saint-level magical beasts all possessed astonishing power.

“Master Linley.” Emperor Johann was the first to walk forward and greet him warmly.

Linley nodded slightly, his face still rather white. “Emperor Johann, I’ve gained some insights as a result of this duel. I need to go back and train.”

Emperor Johann was startled, but then he hurriedly said, “Alright, alright. Master Linley’s training takes priority.”

Linley smiled politely, then headed towards his own people. Wharton, Delia and the others immediately went forward to welcome him, and Wharton immediately gave Linley a bearhug.

“Big Bro.” Wharton’s eyes were red, but he managed to laugh.

“Let’s go. Let's go home,” Linley said as he glanced at Delia. Delia’s beautiful eyelashes were wet. When she had seen Linley in danger just then, Delia had cried from worry.

Linley felt a surge of warmth in his heart.

“Let’s all go together.” Linley laughed as he looked at Delia, who looked back at him and nodded slightly.

Linley’s group immediately left. The countless bystanders all quite conscientiously parted, giving them a path out. Virtually everyone was staring at Linley with a worshipful look in their eyes. A twenty-seven-year-old youngster could actually fight with Haydson, the reputedly strongest Saint in the continent, on such a level. And what’s more, he even had two Saint-level magical beasts, one of which was so powerful that it could suppress Haydson.

“Elder brother...” Blumer looked towards his older brother, Olivier.

Olivier was publicly hailed as a prodigy, but three months ago, he had been defeated by the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson. Nobody blamed him for losing; after all, his opponent had been Haydson. Everyone in the Yulan continent still felt Olivier was an absolute genius.

However...

Linley was younger than him, much younger!

But the result of Linley’s duel with Haydson was clearly different. Even Haydson himself had said that if it weren’t for the fact that Linley’s battle-qi was insufficient, he wouldn’t have been able to defeat Linley.

Victory thanks to superior battle-qi?

In the eyes of many experts, that couldn’t even be considered a victory. This was because the understanding of the Elemental Laws was far more difficult than cultivating battle-qi. As long as one had sufficient time, one’s battle-qi could definitely be increased.

“Second brother, I plan to go train in the Arctic Icecap. Take care of yourself,” Olivier said calmly towards his younger brother.

“Elder brother!” Blumer stared at him, his eyes wide.

He had heard his older brother speak of the Arctic Icecap in the past. The Planar Overseer was there, along with some Saints who had hidden themselves there to train in those wild, desolate, lifeless lands.

Olivier turned his head to glance at his younger brother. "Second brother, remember. You are the younger brother of Olivier. Don't disappoint me."

"Right." Blumer nodded solemnly.

Olivier smiled, and then flew into the air, streaking towards the north. His robes fluttering in the wind, and carrying those two longswords on his back, Olivier disappeared off into the horizon, heading towards the Arctic Icecap.

"Haydson, Linley... when I return, I will definitely defeat both of you!"

Olivier stared towards the north, his eyes filled with newfound resolve.

Under the direction of the army, the millions of spectators quickly dispersed in every direction. Even as they left, they all felt extremely excited and jubilant, forming small groups as they discussed today's battle.

One sword split the mountain. Another sword tunneled through it.

A thousand-meter-high mountain that had an area of several square miles had been turned into a giant pile of rubble.

And then, those two magical beasts had appeared.

All of these events had caused the spectators to feel uncontrollable excitement. After this duel, everyone was filled with awe towards Linley. A twenty-seven-year-old who was able to fight so well against Haydson, and had two such incredible magical beast companions! By the looks of it, one of the magical beasts was capable of beating Haydson.

If he fought together alongside his two magical beasts, who in the Yulan continent would dare stand against them?

"It is fortunate that I had chosen Wharton. Thankfully, our ancestor, the War God, guided me." Emperor Johann let out a long sigh. "I didn't realize that Linley was this formidable. Fortunately, he's become in-laws with our imperial clan."

After this battle at Mt. Tujiao west of the imperial capital, the millions of spectators began to spread the news with astonishing speed. Soon, Linley's

fame resounded throughout the world, becoming one of the most famous names in the entire Yulan continent!

He was able to fight the most powerful Saint, Haydson, to a standstill!

Only twenty-seven years old!

An Arch Magus of the ninth rank!

And a grandmaster sculptor!

And what's more, he was in control of two terrifying Saint-level magical beasts, one of which was capable of defeating Haydson.

This seemed like something out of a legend. Whether as a sculptor, as a magus, or as a warrior, Linley had reached a legendary level. It was as though multiple legends had taken form.

Without question, he was an unequaled genius.

Linley's name and fame as a Saint quickly spread across the entire Yulan continent, much like how the War God's had in the distant past. With some gossipers further exaggerating these legendary events, countless youths began to set Linley as their goal and began to train all the harder!

Linley was guaranteed to leave behind a thick stroke in the history books of the Yulan continent.

What's more... Linley's glory had just begun. He was only twenty-seven years old. His future prospects were unlimited!

The news of Linley's duel with Haydson quickly reached the intelligence networks of the Radiant Church, and arrived at the Sacred Isle via flying magical beast couriers.

The waves crashed against the Sacred Isle. Located in the sea, it was extremely peaceful, and within it there was the powerful force of the Radiant Church.

On the ninth floor of the Radiant Temple.

The Holy Emperor, Heidens, was quietly flipping through the treasured holy scripture of the Radiant Church. Suddenly, two rapping sounds could be clearly

heard on his door.

“Come in.” Heidens voice was as steady as always.

Guillermo, dressed in a long red robe, hurried in. He stared at the Holy Emperor, Heidens, and said in a serious voice, “Your Holiness, word has come regarding Linley’s duel with Haydson.”

Heidens raised his head to glance at Guillermo.

The look on Guillermo’s face aroused Heiden’s suspicions. He accepted the piece of paper from Guillermo and casually flipped through it. As he did, his previously calm expression froze.

“Your Holiness?” Guillermo said in a quiet voice.

Heidens sighed softly, then tossed the parchment onto his desk. Rising to his feet, he walked to the nearby window. Staring at the distant, boundless sea, he said, “Linley... I knew that you are a genius, but I didn’t expect that in ten short years, you could have grown so much.”

Long ago, Heidens had predicted that Linley would become very accomplished. Otherwise, he wouldn’t have sent six Angels to kill Linley.

But who would’ve imagined that soon after those six Angels failed, Linley would cause such a huge stir. First, he fought Olivier to a standstill, which had already shocked the Radiant Church. But this time...

“Your Holiness, what should we do?” Guillermo asked in a low voice. “Currently, Linley is already roughly on par with Haydson.”

“Haydson...”

Heidens continued staring outside the window, his back to Guillermo. “Haydson is indeed quite strong. If I wanted to defeat him, I’d have to expend quite a bit of effort.”

Although Haydson was reputed to be the strongest Saint, there had been many people who had never competed against him. Aside from those experts who had been quietly training for many years, there was the Holy Emperor, the Dark Patriarch, and a number of other experts who didn’t care about fame.

Oracular Magic was one of the three types of High Magic, after all.

A peak-stage Saint-level practitioner of Oracular Magic was extremely powerful, far more so than an ordinary peak-stage Saint-level Grand Magus. Heidens was confident that if he were to go all out, he would be able to defeat Haydson.

That was only if he went all out. What's more, the intelligence network had reputed that Linley also had two terrifying magical beast companions, one of whom even Haydson apparently couldn't do anything to.

"Linley has those two Saint-level magical beasts. If I and Osenno were to both attack, most likely at most we would only be able to force Linley to flee. To kill Linley... we would need to have all the experts of the Church come!" Heidens said in a low voice.

To defeat and to kill were two totally different concepts.

That combination of Linley and two magical beasts was simply too terrifying. Even the Radiant Church needed all of its most powerful experts working together in order to be confident of killing him.

"But even if we succeeded, the Radiant Church will suffer heavy losses. And the imperial capital is the territory of the War God..." A gold light flashed in Heidens' eyes.

Heidens' heart was filled with anger!

"Bam!" The glass window in front of him transformed into glass shards.

"We previously could have killed Linley, but we didn't go full force against him. But now, we no longer have a chance." Heidens looked towards Guillermo, then announced helplessly, "The price of killing Linley is simply too high. We can't afford to pay it. And what's more, we wouldn't necessarily succeed... from today onwards, no longer act against Linley. If we don't make trouble for him... I refuse to believe he would dare come and attack the Sacred Isle."

At this point, this was the only option left to the Radiant Church.

"Yes, Your Holiness." Guillermo laughed bitterly in his heart.

Guillermo couldn't help but think back to the first time he had met Linley, when he had been in a hotel within the Ernst Institute. At that time, Linley was

just a hopeful future prospect.

Only ten years had passed!

That youngster had already become one of the most powerful people in the Yulan continent, and the Radiant Church could no longer do anything about him.

Heidens was frowning.

His heart was filled with hatred!

Did the Church truly lack the power to deal with Linley? No! It had the power! In addition to its high-level experts such as the Holy Emperor and the Praetor, the Radiant Church actually had a number of even more terrifying people in their ranks.

These people had all been training for thousands of years, some even longer.

However...

These people no longer served the Radiant Church.

“These traitors have all forsaken the Lord and only care about themselves!” Heidens’ heart was filled with anger. Those people were all extremely powerful, but none of them cared about the ‘Radiant Sovereign’ any longer, nor did they care about religion or worship.

This group of people had once been the pride of the Radiant Church.

They even included past Holy Emperors. But now, most likely they wouldn’t even care if the Radiant Church were to be completely obliterated. The goal of these people was to become Deities!

To enter the Deity realm!

“Your Holiness?” Guillermo saw that Heidens was daydreaming and quietly called out to him.

Heidens let out a long sigh, then looked at Guillermo. He instructed, “Right, Guillermo, that Dylin of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts dealt us a severe setback. Many followers perished... we must quickly establish ourselves in the Anarchic Lands. We must let the radiant glory of the Lord illuminate that place.”

Guillermo immediately nodded.

The more followers the Lord had, the greater the gifts the Lord would bestow. The 48 Anarchic Duchies were like a piece of juicy meat that the Radiant Church had set its eyes on for a long time now. They had already been engaged in turmoil and strife for thousands of years. The Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows both wanted to subjugate that area, but neither had been successful in their struggles to do so.

The Anarchic Lands bordered both the O'Brien Empire and the Rohault Empire, as well as the great plains to the far east that were ruled over by the ruthless steppe horsemen...

To tame the Anarchic Lands was extremely hard.

"You can go now," Heidens said calmly.

When Guillermo left, Heidens felt a certain sourness in his heart. "The Cult of Shadows. The Anarchic Lands. And Linley, who will be a great danger in the future..."

He knew that Linley would be a threat, but what could he do?

Target: Anarchic Lands!

The gentle wind blew softly against Linley's hair as he sat quietly in the meditative posture on the ground, his eyes shut. His soul had become one with the earth and one with the wind.

"Rumble..." Linley could sense the heat of the scorching hot magma in the depths of the earth.

"Swish..." Linley could sense the changes in the speed of the wind. In the upper atmosphere, the wind was very strong, but the wind within the imperial capital's manors was much weaker. Linley could clearly sense all the changes of the wind.

Linley enjoyed the sensation of training. Each time he gained a new insight and each time he made a breakthrough, he felt his spirit be uplifted and be transformed!

This was a very emotional event that made his heart tremble each time.

"The War God's words were perhaps accurate. It is good to focus one's attention on a single path of training. The Laws of the Earth are vast and boundless, while the 'Throbbing Pulse of the World' should be a fairly deep, profound subset of those laws." Linley could sense this.

Although he and Haydson both studied the Laws of the Earth, they had taken different routes.

His own vibrational attacks were clearly on a higher level than Haydson's!

"Thruuum." "Thruuum." The unique rhythm and tempo of the earth totally absorbed Linley's attention. Linley once more allowed himself to be fully submerged into it as he worked hard to understand the profound secrets hidden within it.

Ever since that battle with Haydson, Linley had become publicly

acknowledged as one of the most powerful experts people knew about in the Yulan continent. He was already someone who was spoken of as being on the level of Haydson, the Holy Emperor, and the Dark Patriarch. In the imperial capital of Channe, the status of the Baruch clan had become even more extraordinary as well.

Clearly, although he had become famous, no one dared to come disturb Linley any more.

“With each new insight, I have a different sensation.” Linley opened his eyes, a smile coming unbidden to his face. Linley sighed with amazement to himself, “Even the ‘Throbbing Pulse of the World’ contains such immeasurably deep and abstruse secrets. How vast and boundless are the Laws of the Earth, then?”

No wonder it was so hard to become a Deity.

And even an incredible person such as the War God remained at the Demigod-level despite five thousand years having passed.

“Big Bro!” Wharton and the Barker brothers ran over.

“I knew you were coming.” Linley laughed and stood up. When he had been in tune with the earth, Linley had sensed Wharton and the others walk over.

After everyone finished lunch.

“Zassler.” Linley rose to his feet and smiled as he gestured at Zassler. He brought Zassler into his own courtyard, and the two sat down facing each other.

“Lord Linley, is there something you need?” Zassler asked questioningly.

A complicated expression was on Linley’s face. He sighed, “Zassler, you know much about the affairs of my Baruch clan.” Zassler had been here at the estate for a long time now. Naturally, he had learned everything there was to know. Zassler immediately nodded.

Linley said calmly, “My parents are both dead now, and the primary culprit is the Radiant Church. In the past, when I left the City of Hess, I swore an oath that one day, I would eradicate the Radiant Church and pull it out by its roots.”

Zassler knew of this goal of Linley’s.

Linley looked at Zassler. “I know that right now, my power is increasing

steadily. What's more, with Bebe, Haeru, and the Barker brothers... I have confidence in my ability to deal with the Radiant Church. I am preparing to start acting against the Radiant Church!"

"You are starting?" Zassler was startled.

Linley was planning to openly act against the Radiant Church?

"Linley, although it is true that our power is now quite formidable, the roots of the Radiant Church are very deep as well..." Zassler hurriedly tried to dissuade him. Although he, too, wished to destroy the Radiant Church, they had to be wise about it.

Linley smiled and waved his hand. "No, I'm not going to fight them head on yet."

"Last time, I heard you talking about the Anarchic Lands. Didn't you say the Radiant Church highly values that area? And that there is a lot of power there?" Linley asked.

Zassler was over eight hundred years old, and he had spent many years living in the Anarchic Lands.

"Of course they value it!"

Zassler explained in detail, "Linley, based on my understanding of the Radiant Church, aside from sacrificing pure souls to the Radiant Sovereign, the Radiant Sovereign also needs sufficient worshippers! The more worshippers they have, the more faith is generated. The Radiant Church always prattles on about 'spreading the Lord's light across the entire world', precisely because of this goal."

Linley nodded slightly.

Zassler clicked his fingernails together. "Linley, in the entire continent, the most chaotic areas are the great plains of the far east, the Anarchic Lands, and the Eighteen Northern Duchies!"

"Of those places, the Eighteen Northern Duchies are engaged in constant warfare, while the steppe riders of the great plains are famous for their savagery. Bloodlust is bred into their very bones. How could they possibly

worship the Radiant Sovereign? The very nature of the steppe warriors guarantees that the Radiant Church would not be able to succeed with them,” Zassler chatted slowly. “As for the Eighteen Northern Duchies, those Eighteen Northern Duchies already worship the Frost Goddess.”

“The Frost Goddess?” Linley actually didn’t know much about the Eighteen Northern Duchies.

“Right.” Zassler nodded. “Although the Eighteen Northern Duchies engage in constant battle amongst themselves, the Frost Goddess Shrine holds absolute dominion amongst them. And the secrets of the Frost Goddess Shrine are immeasurably deep... and what’s more, the Frost Goddess Shrine isn’t ambitious, and has remained within the Eighteen Northern Duchies this entire time. Naturally, the Radiant Church wouldn’t go and provoke them and create a powerful foe.”

Linley laughed.

Linley had always wondered about this. The Eighteen Northern Duchies were located to the north of the Forest of Darkness. The only nation it bordered was the O’Brien Empire, and the area it covered was roughly that of an Administrative Province. Given the power of the O’Brien Empire, taming it shouldn’t be hard.

But why hadn’t they?

Only now did Linley understand that this had to do with the Frost Goddess Shrine.

“Since these two places are out of the question, the only place left is the Anarchic Lands!” Zassler sighed. “The Anarchic Lands are extremely chaotic. Terrifyingly chaotic.”

“Chaotic? How so?”

Zassler sighed emotionally. “First of all, in the past, according to calculations, there were 48 duchies. But the boundaries in the Anarchic Lands constantly shift. Every few years, the number of duchies will change. Perhaps there would be fifty, or perhaps there would be forty. It is hard to say. This is the first reason why it is chaotic.”

“The second reason why it is chaotic is because of their borders. They are located next to the O’Brien Empire, the Rohault Empire, and the clans of the great plains in the far east. All three of these powers have designs upon them!”

“The third reason they are chaotic is because both the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows have desired to hold sway over the Anarchic Lands. In these lands, both of these religions are very powerful and have great influence. The two religions are diametrically opposed, and the struggles between them persist unabated.”

Listening to this, Linley couldn’t help but sigh. If, given all of these conditions, the Anarchic Lands wasn’t in a state of chaos, it wouldn’t make any sense at all.

“There is a fourth reason why they are chaotic!” Zassler sighed with feeling. “To the north of the Anarchic Lands is the vast Forest of Darkness. The Forest of Darkness contains a multitude of magical beasts, with the total number being not much less than the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. Every few decades, or perhaps every decade, there will be a wave of magical beasts... countless magical beasts will come from the Forest of Darkness and charge towards the Anarchic Lands. This is no ordinary disaster!”

Linley’s face changed.

An explosive surge of magical beasts?

After having experienced the Apocalypse Day of the Holy Union, Linley knew exactly how terrifying a large wave of magical beasts could be. That definitely was a day of doom.

“Of course, although it is described as a wave of magical beasts, it can’t compete with the ‘Apocalypse Day’ in terms of how terrifying that day was.” Zassler laughed. “Most of the magical beasts that come from the Forest of Darkness are middle-rank or low-rank beasts. Only very few are high ranked magical beasts. And although they are numerous, at those times, all of the duchies in the Anarchic Lands will work together and be able to wipe out all of the magical beasts.”

Linley now understood.

If there were few high ranking magical beasts, the damage that these waves

could cause would be much lower. In addition, the numbers weren't as large as when the Holy Union had been invaded. Naturally, the amount of damage that could be caused would be limited.

“Linley, but the difference between this and what happened in the Holy Union is that the wave of magical beasts coming from the Forest of Darkness doesn't just happen once. It happens every decade or every few decades, and as a result, the Anarchic Lands can never be truly at peace.” Zassler sighed.

Linley secretly sighed as well.

Due to these four reasons, the Anarchic Lands would indeed be forever chaotic.

“Although the duchies are small, all 48 duchies combined make up a large amount of territory. The Anarchic Lands definitely rival roughly half of the O'Brien Empire in scope. In fact, the size of the area that the Anarchic Lands covers is roughly the same size as the current Holy Union.”

Linley nodded as well.

After the Apocalypse Day, the Holy Union only had two thirds of the territory it previously held. And of course, the O'Brien Empire was a territorially vast Empire to begin with.

It made sense that the Anarchic Lands, being half the size of the O'Brien Empire, was roughly the same size as the current Holy Union.

“Such a vast territory naturally attracts the interest of the Radiant Church. The Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows both have many experts there, and their roots are deep.”

Hearing this, Linley laughed.

How many people would the Radiant Church send to a territory that was roughly equal in size to the entire Holy Union?

“If the Radiant Church has twenty or thirty Saints, they would at least have to send five, six, or seven Saints over there,” Linley said to himself.

The Sacred Isle was definitely the place where most of the Radiant Church's experts would cluster.

The Saints sent to the Anarchic Lands most likely should not be the most powerful experts the Radiant Church had.

“After my little brother’s wedding, we’ll head to the Anarchic Lands.” Linley looked at Zassler, smiling. “Let our war against the Radiant Church commence in the Anarchic Lands.”

Destroying the roots that the Radiant Church had painstakingly cultivated over thousands of years in the Anarchic Lands would definitely enrage the Radiant Church to the point of insanity.

“The Anarchic Lands?” Zassler’s eyes lit up. “Excellent!”

Linley smiled. Destroying the influence that the Radiant Church had built up there over thousands of years definitely wasn’t something that would be accomplished in a year or two.

“I’ll spend part of my time training while spending the rest of my time dealing with them. After destroying their forces in the Anarchic Lands, I should have reached the Saint level in my human form. By then, my understanding of the ‘Throbbing Pulse of the World’ should be very high as well. At that time... we can directly engage in battle against the Radiant Church.”

Linley had a very clear series of plans in his mind.

They would act in accordance with these plans. They wouldn’t be impatient or rash. One step at a time, they would rip out the roots of the Radiant Church.

Wharton had previously said that his mind would be too unsettled to be able to have his wedding with Nina before Linley’s duel with Haydson. They had now set the date of the wedding: September 15th.

It was now the beginning of September. Both the Count’s estate as well as the imperial clan were busy making preparations for this grand wedding.

The wedding banquet was far more important than the engagement banquet.

Count Wharton’s estate. Linley’s residence.

“Linley, our ship and our crew are planning to return to the Yulan Empire. I need to go back with my teacher,” Delia looked at Linley, her lips curving downwards as she spoke. Linley had previously been smiling, but suddenly, his

smile froze.

Knowing that Delia was about to leave, Linley couldn't help but feel a bit heartsick.

The past few months he had spent with Delia had been the most relaxed period in the past ten years of Linley's life. Every day, he was filled with smiles.

"You are leaving?" Linley forced out a smile. "Then let me wish you a safe journey."

Delia actually smiled. She could tell that Linley was unwilling to part with her. "However... I told my teacher that he can go back first, and that I would stay here as a private citizen."

"Ah?!" Linley didn't know whether to laugh or to cry.

"Are you unhappy?" Delia frowned.

"Happy, happy!" Linley hurriedly said, but then he looked solemnly at Delia. "Delia, there's something I need to tell you."

"What?" Delia looked expectantly at Linley.

"After my younger brother's grand wedding, I will most likely need to go to the Anarchic Lands," Linley said.

"Oh. Then I will go as well." Delia didn't hesitate in the slightest.

But just at this moment, a series of excited shouts could be heard, while a human figure rushed at high speed to Linley's residence. From outside the door, Gates' loud voice could be heard shouting, "Lord, my fourth brother has also broken through and reached the ninth rank!"

Of the five Barker brothers, four now had the power of Saints.

"Yet another Saint?" A smile couldn't help but appear on Linley's face. These five brothers were indeed capable of easily bringing people wonderful surprises.

Reynolds' Crisis

Of Barker and his brothers, at this point, Barker, Ankh, Boone, and Gates had all reached the ninth rank. After transforming, they had the power of a Saint. As for the third brother, Hazer, he was just one small step away from reaching the ninth rank and could break through at any moment. Of the five brothers, Barker, Gates, and Hazer had already mastered the art of 'wielding something heavy as though it were light'.

"After my little brother's grand wedding, we'll head for the Anarchic Lands. With the assistance of Barker and his brothers, things will be much simpler." Linley's eyes glowed with an unspoken light.

Linley was extremely excited and couldn't wait to begin his future life in the Anarchic Lands, where he would do battle against the Radiant Church.

Aside from the wonderful surprise of Boone reaching the ninth rank, everyone was also eagerly anticipating the upcoming wedding. Wharton was all smiles every day as well.

This time, Wharton and Nina would be holding their wedding ceremony in the imperial palace. The excitement and hustle and bustle would far exceed the engagement ceremony.

Within a quiet courtyard.

After having finished his training, Linley sat next to a stone desk. With a flip of his hand, he retrieved a flask of fruit wine. While drinking wine, he stared forward, pondering. From the look of him, he was clearly thinking about something.

Bebe stealthily peeked at Linley.

"Swish." Bebe suddenly scurried onto Linley's table.

Linley was startled by Bebe. "Bebe, what are you doing?"

Bebe stood up straight, folding his claws over his chest, staring at Linley with an appraising gaze. “Based on the observations of myself, Bebe, I’ve discovered that you, Boss... are thinking lustful thoughts about love!”

Bebe spoke with the aura of absolute conviction.

Linley didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry. “I’m thinking about those dear bros of mine. In a few days, it will be Wharton’s grand wedding. But Boss Yale, Second Bro, Fourth Bro... none of them will be able to come...”

Linley let out a long sigh.

“I wonder how the three of them are currently doing.” Yale, Reynolds, and George, these three dear friends of Linley, held a very firm position in Linley’s heart. Their love for each other was as deep as that of real brothers.



*

Reynolds wasn’t doing very well. After that short break, he had returned to the army. Even after learning of Linley’s duel with Haydson, he hadn’t had a chance to come watch.

This was because, as a soldier, he had to follow orders and procedures.

Although Reynolds was quite sloppy and lazy, when he was in the army, he absolutely was a man who would do what he said he would and who would obey orders without question.

At the borders of the Southeast Administrative Province of the O’Brien Empire, in the area south of the City of Neil, was the area where the O’Brien Empire intersected with the Rohault Empire. This was also a fairly chaotic area.

The Rohault Empire was located to the south of the Anarchic Lands and west of the great plains of the far east.

Due to constant warfare with the steppe riders of the great plains, the Rohault Empire had a very ferocious, martial spirit, and their armies of mounted knights were legendary for their prowess. The Rohault Empire and the O’Brien Empire constantly engaged in warfare in the area near Neil City, and the blood

from those countless battles had stained the very dirt itself a dark red color in the wilderness outside the city.

“Whoosh!” “Whoosh!” The strong wind howled through the wild grass, which was half the height of a man. The wild grass bent from the wind. Through it, one could see that there was a small creek nearby, where dozens of stallions were drinking water with their heads lowered.

Several dozen knights were seated on the ground, resting, while several others were maintaining a watch.

Right now, Reynolds was sitting atop a tree, his hawk-like eyes constantly scanning their surroundings. When he was in the army, Reynolds was very different from how he acted in private. Right now, he wore a deep blue armor that had a golden insignia of a flame emblazoned onto his chest. This represented that he was a member of the ‘Golden Flame Legion’, one of the elite legions of the O’Brien Empire.

And the design of his armor gave testament to his rank; senior captain.

Reynolds withdrew a watch from his breast-pocket and checked the time. “Three in the afternoon. At five, the others should have arrived.”

“Milord.” A blue-haired knight walked over with a laugh. “The Rohault Empire is currently not in a state of warfare with the O’Brien Empire. Don’t you feel that we are wasting energy by maintaining such a long watch?”

“Tiger, stop talking.” Reynolds frowned.

“Yes sir.” The blue-haired knight no longer dared to laugh.

Commanding this squadron of knights was actually a downgraded position for him as a senior captain. In total, there were three medium-sized squadrons with nine hundred people total. Right now, they had been separated into eighteen smaller squads and taken separate routes. The squad that Reynolds was leading was actually his personal squad, and a very powerful one.

He had already been in the army for quite a few years, and Reynolds had slowly risen through the ranks from common soldier to his current position.

“Although the Rohault Empire has not been in open warfare for over ten

years with our O'Brien Empire, aren't there always small skirmishes? Each year, the Empire suffers over ten thousand casualties from these border skirmishes," Reynolds said solemnly. "And based on my calculations, it has been a very long time since a large battle. I imagine the population of the Rohault Empire has already reached its limits, and they will therefore force some battles. Thus, we must be careful."

The meaning of warfare was very simple.

When the population rose too much and there wasn't enough land or food to support the people, the Empires would naturally begin to war against each other. If they didn't, the Empires would fall into internal chaos. After two Empires both suffered a high amount of casualties, the reduced population would mean that the amount of land they had was sufficient to sustain their people. Naturally, they would cease fighting.

In truth, this was one of the most basic principles.

After all, to most commoners, the most important, basic necessity was that of sufficient food and a place to live.

"Yes, milord. We will be careful." The blue-haired knight laughed.

"Right. Milord, you previously were at the Ernst Institute with Master Linley. I heard that he fought Lord Haydson to a standstill?" the blue-haired knight said quietly.

Hearing his subordinate ask him about Linley, Reynolds couldn't help but begin to grin.

"The only reason he suffered a slight loss was because he didn't have enough battle-qi," Reynolds said calmly. In his heart, Reynolds actually felt quite regretful that he hadn't been able to go watch this life-and-death battle of his beloved bro.

Turning his head to stare westwards, Reynolds squinted his eyes due to the scorching rays of the sun. His dear brother Linley was in the imperial capital to the west.

"In a bit more than a year, my ten-year commitment will be up and I'll be able to leave the army." Reynolds secretly sighed to himself.

The eight-plus years of army life had caused Reynolds to truly enjoy being in the army, but Reynolds knew that per the regulations of his clan, if the descendants of the clan were able to reach the rank of legion commander or deputy legion commander, they would be permitted to remain in the army. If they did not, then they would have to return home to the clan.

Right now, Reynolds was only a senior captain. He was still one step away.

But although Reynolds did rather enjoy the army life, he didn't want to spend his entire life in the army. He still wanted to quietly train his magic in peace. He was already a magus of the seventh rank. If he spent another hundred years in painstaking training, he still had a shot at becoming an Arch Magus of the ninth rank.

While he quietly waited, the other squads began to arrive. By around 4:50 PM, around four hundred people had gathered here, with five hundred yet to arrive.

"Hrm?" Reynolds suddenly frowned.

He suddenly had the sensation of impending danger, as though an invisible, murderous force was stealthily creeping towards them. As a magus, Reynolds had an extremely powerful spiritual force, and his premonitions were far stronger than most people's.

"Everyone, be careful!" Reynolds suddenly shouted coldly.

"Yes, milord!" All the surrounding knights answered, but right at this moment, the sound of frantic hoof beats could be heard, drawing closer to them at high speed.

"Enemy ambush!" Enemy ambush!" That fierce shout shattered the calm skies.

Virtually all of the knights reacted very quickly, snatching up their spears and raising their shields as they all charged at high speed towards their horses. But just at this moment, sharp arrows began to rain down upon them from afar...

"Swish!" "Swish!"

The arrows rained down upon them at high speed like a plague of locusts. All

of the knights immediately knelt down while raising their shields to protect themselves, while moving closer to each other.

The Empire's shields were of very high quality. In battle, it was rare that ordinary arrows would be able to pierce through them. And indeed, many of the arrows struck the shields, but the shields would only tremble slightly as the arrows fell to the ground, spent. But ten or so arrows passed straight through the shields, as though they were made of paper...

"Pierce!"

A fast-moving arrow tore straight through a shield, then pierced straight through the knight's head. Brain matter exploded out.

Reynolds, seeing this, felt heartsick. These knights were his personal squad, and had followed him for six years. Six years of living together had resulted in deep bonds of affection. But Reynolds instantly could tell: "To be able to pierce through shields from hundreds of meters away means they are definitely experts of the seventh or eighth ranks. And there are quite a few of them."

"Rumble." As those distant people moved nearer, the sound of their horses' hoof steps grew clearer. This group of people all wore gray armor, and the hooves of their horses were covered with cloth.

In front of these people, over ten bloodstained knights were fleeing.

"Rossi." Reynolds' face changed. Those ten knights belonged to his squad.

"Milord, flee, quick! These are the soldiers of the Rohault Empire, and they number in the thousands! Quick... ah!!!" A bloodied knight ran past at high speed, but in the blink of an eye, an arrow went straight through his throat.

"Kill them all! Let none survive!" a cold voice rang out from afar.

"Flee!"

Reynolds shouted loudly. Fight against an opponent numbering in the thousands, while he only had a few hundred people? And what's more, they were being ambushed, and the enemy had multiple elite warriors of the seventh and eighth ranks.

In addition, their duty was reconnaissance. They had to go back and spread

the news.

The lucky survivors immediately vaulted onto their warhorses. Perhaps because their enemies wanted to acquire those several hundred horses, the arrows that had rained down on them just now had only struck the knights. Not a single warhorse had been killed.

Flee!

Flee!

The only thing on Reynolds' mind was to flee at high speed. At the beginning, four hundred men had tried to flee, but right now, only a hundred were left. That a hundred were left was because Reynolds had used magic to intimidate their enemies. While fleeing, Reynolds was still muttering the words to even more magical spells.

With Reynolds at the center, eight swathes of flame shaped like greatswords suddenly exploded forth, scattering in every direction and charging directly towards the pursuing armies.

Fire magic – Decapitating Inferno!

“Crackle, crackle.” The blazing flames slashed down on the bodies of those knights, who immediately began to scream in agony. Their metal armor rapidly melted, and in the blink of an eye, they were turned to char. The surrounding grass began to blaze as well, and the following knights were forced to slow down.

“Chase, chase!” That blonde, tousled-haired leader stared angrily at the distant Reynolds.

If it hadn't been for that distant magus, he would've wiped out this group of people long ago. But because of that magus and because it was autumn and the grass was dry, the grass had easily begun to burn and caused a huge wildfire, blocking their pursuit.

Magical force wasn't endless.

Reynolds didn't dare to use any actual spells of the seventh rank. All of the spells he had used were of the sixth rank. But despite that, nearly all of the

mageforce in Reynolds' body had been exhausted.

Only a single squad of three hundred soldiers of the Rohault Empire continued their pursuit, but this squad had over ten experts of the seventh rank. Clearly, this was an elite squad. And in Reynolds' squad, there was only a single warrior of the seventh rank, and of course himself, a magus of the seventh rank.

"The City of Neil! I can see the City of Neil!" one of the knights shouted loudly.

"Neil City!" Reynolds saw the distant, hazy outlines of the city. His eyes were filled with hope, and he frantically urged his horse forwards.

"Swish!" Yet another arrow shot at them from behind, and the exhausted Reynolds once again frantically dodged while raising his shield to block. With a 'slash' sound, the arrow pierced through the shield and into Reynolds' shoulder. The powerful force of that arrow actually caused the exhausted body of Reynolds' to sway, and he nearly fell from his horse.

After running for two hours, it was almost dusk.

The walls of the City of Neil were manned by quite a few warriors, as well as a number of nobles who were on the walls strolling about aimlessly.

"Open the city gates, quick! There are soldiers of the Rohault Empire behind us. Kill them all!!!" Reynolds roared furiously.

In the blink of an eye, Reynolds and his tens of wounded surviving soldiers reached the outskirts of the City of Neil, but the gates to the city didn't open.

"Swish!" An arrow shot out at one of the nobles on the wall.

"Don't open it! Don't open the city gates!" A shrill, ear-piercing voice could be heard coming from up above. "Fire your arrows! Shoot the enemies to death!"

That pursuing squad of the Rohault Empire stopped just outside of bow range. Ten of them actually dismounted, then charged directly towards the city walls. They easily dodged the arrows aimed at them from above, and all of them were covered with a sheath of battle-qi.

These were mighty warriors indeed.

"Kill that magus." The leader of those ten men stared fixedly at Reynolds.

They had chased all the way over here for the sake of killing Reynolds. A magus without mageforce was simply far too weak.

Right now, Reynolds couldn't fight back at all.

"Open the gates!" Reynolds' squad of knights felt totally hopeless now. Although they had several dozen people and their enemy only had ten, just from looking at their opponents' battle-qi, they could tell that the leader of their enemies could probably kill them all by himself.

Grievous News on the Wedding Day

“Open the gates!”

“Open the gates!”

Reynolds and his men continuously howled with anger. The enemy only had three hundred in total, while Neil City had tens of thousands of soldiers. What was there to be afraid of? After making their way back here, Reynolds and his men had thought that their lives had been saved, but now...

“Slash!” A warblade chopped down towards a knight’s neck, bifurcating him into two pieces. His intestines rolled out.

“Die, all of you, die!” The leader of the enemies laughed wildly.

Reynolds’ side was quickly decimated. In the blink of an eye, only a few were left. Staring at the enemies, Reynolds couldn’t help but feel despair.

“Am I going to die?”

Reynolds had many goals and dreams which he had yet to accomplish. But now, he was about to die.

On the city walls, a group of nobles were surrounding an ashen-faced middle-aged noble.

“Your Imperial Highness, are you alright?”

“Don’t be afraid, your Imperial Highness. The enemies won’t be able to break in.”

After continuous reassurances, the middle-aged noble slowly calmed down. This man was the administrator of the Southeast Administrative Province, the younger brother of the Emperor, Prince Julin.

Prince Julin wasn’t born with any spine or ability, but he was the younger brother of Emperor Johann, and Emperor Johann doted on this younger

brother. Thus, Prince Julin was living quite a comfortable life.

He knew that it had been over a decade since the O'Brien Empire and the Rohault Empire had engaged in any large-scale battles. Thus, he had been happy to come here to 'take a look at the borders'. His arrival had caused all the local nobles of Neil City to surround and pamper him.

But who would've thought that just as he was bragging about the military might of the Empire up on the wall, an arrow had shot towards him. Fortunately, the guards next to him had blocked the windows.

"Open the gates!" A desolate, angry howl from below.

The surrounding warriors' eyes were turning red at the scene. There weren't many enemies. If the army of Neil City were to charge out, they could definitely kill all the enemies with ease. But Prince Julin refused to let them open the gates.

"Your Imperial Highness, there aren't many enemies below. Let me lead my men to go kill them," a military officer begged.

"Bullshit." Prince Julin pointed at his nose and cursed, "What the hell do you know? Can't you see that far away, there are several hundred soldiers?"

"But your Imperial Highness, our City of Neil has thirty thousand soldiers," the military officer argued.

Prince Julin sneered, "It is dusk right now, and in the distance, there is a great deal of tall grass. Who knows how many enemies are lying in wait? Think about it, for just a few hundred people to dare attack, surely they must have some sort of support, yes? It isn't worth the risk and the additional bloodshed just to rescue a few dozen soldiers of the Empire."

Prince Julin spoke with authority and determination.

"But your Imperial Highness..." The military officer didn't know whether to laugh or to cry. Clearly, this Prince Julin didn't know anything about military affairs. Given how sturdy the City of Neil was, even if their enemy had a hundred thousand soldiers, they wouldn't find it easy to break through the defense of Neil City and its thirty thousand soldiers.

What's more, his side was just going to go kill the enemies below the city walls. It wasn't as though they were going to chase and counterattack.

Prince Julin wiped away the cold sweat from his forehead.

"Isn't it just a few dozen common soldiers? If they die, they die. I don't want to be in any risk," Prince Julin secretly said to himself. He immediately said with severity, "Remember, you are not to attack without authorization. Otherwise, if something happens, don't blame me for being merciless."

"Your Imperial Highness, the leader of those people seems to be Reynolds," someone suddenly said.

"Which Reynolds?" Prince Julin frowned.

"The Reynolds who is in the principal line of descent for the Dunstan clan."

"The Dunstan clan?" Prince Julin frowned, but then he laughed uncaringly. "To die for the sake of the Empire is a glorious thing for their clan. In addition, the Dunstan clan is a large one. So what if a single descendant dies?"

Prince Julin didn't care in the slightest.

"Open the city gates!" That desolate cry rang out again. And then, there were no more cries to be heard from outside the city.

Reynolds body slumped down, falling against the city walls. An arrow was in his shoulder, and a terrifying wound could be seen in his chest. Fresh blood flowed everywhere.

Reynolds had already lost consciousness.

"Senior captain?" Reynolds' armor revealed his status.

The leader immediately grabbed Reynolds, tossing him onto his shoulder, then shouted to his men, "Let's go." As he spoke, those ten men left as fast as lightning.

From start to finish, aside from shooting arrows atop the city walls, the defenders of the City of Neil didn't open the city gates or engage the enemies in battle at all.

The Dunstan clan possessed tremendous influence in the military. Soon, the

news of how Reynolds' entire unit had been wiped out, while Prince Julin had given the ridiculous order that his men were not to leave the city and engage in battle, reached its way to the Dunstan clan.

Not long after Prince Julin returned to his residence, his subordinates told him something shocking.

"Your Imperial Highness, that Lord Reynolds who died in battle was an extremely close friend of Master Linley. The two studied together at the Ernst Institute, and their affection for each other rivals that of real brothers," a bearded middle-aged man said respectfully to Prince Julin.

"What? Master Linley? The two are as close as real brothers?" Prince Julin instantly jumped to his feet.

"Those... those bastards! Why didn't they tell me up on the wall?" Prince Julin said frantically.

"Your Imperial Highness, there aren't many people who know of the relationship between Linley and Reynolds. Even in the imperial capital, only a few nobles know. How could those distant nobles of Neil City know about this?"

Prince Julin immediately began to frown.

He wasn't afraid of offending the Dunstan clan. No matter how powerful the Dunstan clan was, they relied on being in the good graces of the Emperor. It was just one clan member, after all. All he had to do was to say something to the Dunstan clan, and this matter would definitely be at an end.

But offending Linley was something else entirely.

"Immediately reach out to the Dunstan clan. Also... prevent any news from coming out of the City of Neil. Don't let the information get to the imperial capital, especially to Linley. Just say that Reynolds' death was in battle and in service to the Empire." Prince Julin was truly beginning to panic.

Yulan calendar, year 10009. September 15th. This was the day when Wharton and Nina were going to get married. Wharton was the younger brother of the world-famous Master Linley, while Nina was an Imperial Princess.

Their grand wedding was naturally an incomparably important affair.

Within the palace, beautiful music wafted throughout the halls like flowing water. All the nobles were toasting each other while chatting and laughing.

“Emperor Johann, excuse me,” Linley said with a calm laugh as he nursed his cup of wine.

Linley truly was not accustomed to dealing with these nobles. After saying a few words to a few people, Linley left the main hall and headed towards a garden, with Delia soon following him there.

“What is it, Linley?” Delia laughed.

“Not comfortable.” Linley chuckled.

“It seems that today you aren’t in a very good mood.” Delia saw that an unhappy look was on Linley’s face. Linley nodded. “I don’t know why, but for some reason, I feel anxious and irritable.”

When one’s spirit had reached Linley’s level, it was quite rare that one would feel irritable and uncomfortable.

“Today is Wharton’s grand wedding. Be happy,” Delia consoled.

Linley let out a long breath and nodded.

While Linley and Delia were in the garden, Emperor Johann received a secret letter. His personal attendant said in a soft voice, “Your Imperial Majesty, Reynolds of the Dunstan clan died in battle.”

“Reynolds died? Which Reynolds?” Emperor Johann glanced at his personal attendant. Why did a single person’s death have to be brought to the attention to the Emperor? Did he, the Emperor, have nothing better to do than to worry about this?

“This was a classmate of Master Linley’s at the Ernst Institute. He is on extremely good terms with Master Linley,” his personal attendant said in a quiet voice. “Your Imperial Majesty, this matter involves his Imperial Highness, Prince Julin.”

“Julin?”

“According to our reports, Reynolds and his men were pursued by the soldiers of the Rohault Empire to the walls of the city, but Prince Julin ordered his men

not to open the gates and to strictly defend only.”

“Defend? How many soldiers did the enemy have?” Emperor Johann frowned.

“Three hundred,” the palace attendant said.

Emperor Johann’s eyes bulged out. “Three hundred, and he had them defend only? This Julin... jeeze...” Emperor Johann felt a surge of anger, but then, in the blink of an eye, he understood what had just happened.

He understood his younger brother very well.

Julin was a person without much ambition. His main problem was that he was a bit of a coward. Emperor Johann didn’t consider this much of a flaw. After all, he didn’t need to rely on Julin to lead his armies or to do anything else.

But now, the situation had just gotten complicated. If Linley were to find out... and if Linley were to cause trouble...

Thinking back to the terrifying power Linley had displayed at Mt. Tujiao, and how powerful those two magical beasts were, Emperor Johann immediately understood that unless the experts from the War God’s College were to intervene, there was no way he could suppress Linley’s forces at all.

But how could the War God’s College intervene for the sake of a mere prince?

This was impossible.

“Julin. All he ever does is create disasters for me.” Emperor Johann rapidly considered what to do. Although he was furious, he still had to protect his little brother.

“Your Imperial Majesty, as Prince Julin tells it, they didn’t have a chance to rescue Reynolds before Reynolds and his men were killed at the base of the city walls. At that time, it was already very dark, and they weren’t sure as to exactly how many men the opponents had,” the palace attendant said softly.

Emperor Johann nodded slightly. He carefully considered how to manage this affair.

There was no way this could be totally hidden!

This was Emperor Johann’s first reaction. It was best not to try and hide

something from a peak-stage Saint like Linley. Otherwise, once the lie was discovered, things would go catastrophically wrong.

Emperor Johann immediately walked out of the hall and headed towards the garden in search of Linley.

“Emperor Johann?” Linley, who was strolling alongside Delia, saw Emperor Johann walk over with a dire expression on his face. He couldn’t help but call out to him questioningly.

When Emperor Johann saw Linley, the look on his face became all the grimmer.

“Emperor Johann, what exactly has happened?” Linley frowned.

Emperor Johann sighed. “Linley, I’m going to tell you something, but you have to be calm.”

“What happened?” Linley was growing nervous. These past few days, Linley kept feeling irritable and restless. Hearing Emperor Johann’s words, he began to worry.

It seemed as though something terrible had happened.

Emperor Johann let out a low sigh. “Just now, we received word from the Golden Flame Legion based in the Southeast Administrative Province. A squad of knights led by Reynolds was ambushed by enemy forces, and was chased back the entire way...”

Linley’s heart instantly sank.

“Reynolds and a few people managed to make their way towards Neil City, but the soldiers of Neil City didn’t have enough time to save them. Reynolds and his men... all died in battle!”

“All died in battle!” “All died in battle!” “All died in battle!” ...

These four words struck Linley like thunderbolts, reverberating and echoing in Linley’s mind. Linley felt as though his mind had gone blank, and all strength had left his body. Everything had gone blank!

After a long time...

“Fourth Bro... Fourth Bro... he died?” Linley stuttered.

“Hi there. I’m Reynolds, from the O’Brien Empire.” Linley could still clearly recall how he had met Reynolds for the first time, as they were registering to enroll in the Ernst Institute. The first person he had met was Reynolds. At that time, Linley had been with Uncle Hillman, while Reynolds had been with his Grandpa Lomu.

Two young children had become friends, just like that.

The eight years after that, they had been together day and night. Reynolds’ sloppiness, his mischievousness, his sincerity... his joyful laughter. One scene after another swam to the forefront of Linley’s mind.

“Fourth Bro, he died?”

Linley couldn’t believe it. Just a while ago, his Fourth Bro had been chatting and laughing with himself and Boss Yale. But just like that, he had died in battle.

Linley could clearly remember how he had looked and how he had sounded.

How could Fourth Bro have died?

“Master Linley, I hope you can restrain your grief.” Emperor Johann, seeing the look on Linley’s face, began to grow nervous. He was afraid that Linley would go crazy.

Linley turned to stare at Emperor Johann, his gaze stabbing at Emperor Johann like sharp daggers. In a low voice, he said, “Emperor Johann, tell me, what exactly happened? I hope you won’t lie to me. If you are wise, you can probably guess what the results would be for someone lying to me! Tell me, what exactly happened?”

Is it True?

Emperor Johann couldn't help but frown at Linley's attitude. No matter what, he was still the Emperor of the O'Brien Empire.

"Emperor Johann!" Linley's voice grew even deeper, and his eyes stabbed at Emperor Johann.

Emperor Johann suddenly had the sensation that he was sinking into a cold, dark abyss. Linley's stare was making it somewhat hard for him to breathe. Emperor Johann's throat clenched, and he managed to say, "Master Linley, what is the meaning of this? Don't you trust Us?"

By his side, Delia maintained her silence.

Linley stared at Emperor Johann. In a deep voice, he said, "Emperor Johann, it isn't that I don't trust you. Only, Reynolds is my close friend. All of a sudden, you tell me that he died in battle? Tell me... how could I not want to try and find out the truth of the matter?"

"The truth of the matter?"

Emperor Johann stood erect and said angrily, "Master Linley, can it be that We are not telling the truth? Let Us tell you once again, Reynolds was pursued and killed by the forces of the Rohault Empire to the walls of Neil City, where he died in battle. There is no question about this!"

"Neil City?" Linley's eyes couldn't help but narrow. "Emperor Johann, if Reynolds had already fled to the walls of Neil City, how could it be that those many soldiers of Neil City were unable to rescue Reynolds?"

Emperor Johann hesitated, but then said firmly, "At that time, We were not there. However, according to what We have learned, just as Reynolds arrived at the walls of Neil City, he was killed before the soldiers of the city had a chance to rescue him."

His Fourth Bro had died!

Linley didn't wish to believe it. When he had been interrogating Emperor Johann, scenes and memories of the time he had spent with his Fourth Bro came drifting uncontrollably to his mind, causing Linley's baleful feeling in his heart to grow even stronger.

Emperor Johann could sense that Linley's mood was transforming. The aura of the surrounding environment had become terrifyingly oppressive. Giant beads of sweat appeared on Emperor Johann's forehead, but he only stared at Linley.

No matter what, he couldn't open his mouth and spill the truth. He had to insist that Reynolds' had died in battle, and the soldiers of the City of Neil didn't have a chance to rescue him.

Linley closed his eyes, forcing down that demonic feeling in his heart. He let out a breath.

When his eyes opened, they flashed like lightning. Under Linley's gaze, Emperor Johann felt tremendous psychological pressure. As an ordinary warrior, how could his spiritual energy compare to that of an Arch Magus of the ninth rank like Linley?

"Emperor Johann, you must understand, perhaps what you are telling me is true. But are you able to guarantee that the person who brought you this information also told the truth?" Linley's voice was very low.

Emperor Johann nodded without any hesitation, saying firmly, "Linley, you must believe Us."

Linley glanced at Emperor Johann, then said calmly, "Emperor Johann, I'm not in a good mood today. I'm going back home. Let my little brother and Nina know."

Although his forehead was covered in sweat, Emperor Johann still squeezed out a smile. "Master Linley, We can totally understand how you are feeling. Master Linley, go home and get some rest. We shall definitely inform Wharton and Nina."

Linley nodded, then left the imperial palace alongside Delia.

Watching Linley leave, Emperor Johann finally let out a sigh of relief. Wiping the sweat from his forehead, he secretly said to himself, “Good heavens, lying in front of Linley is absolutely terrifying. If Linley were to have let loose his anger, no one here would have been able to stop him.”

After calming himself down, Emperor Johann once more summoned that noble, majestic smile to his face and returned to the main hall.

Linley and Delia walked shoulder-to-shoulder on Boulder Street. On the way back from the imperial palace, Linley had been silent the entire time. Next to him, Delia could sense how much pain Linley was in.

After a long moment, Delia said softly, “Linley.”

Linley was startled out of his reverie by this voice. Having escaped his memories for a moment, he looked at Delia. “What is it?”

Delia said in a gentle, comforting voice, “Are you thinking about Reynolds?”

Linley nodded gently. “Delia, in my heart, Boss Yale, Second Bro, and Fourth Bro are like true brothers to me. I’ve never even considered the possibility that Fourth Bro would die in battle.” Although he was calm when saying these words, Delia noticed that Linley’s eyes had turned red.

Despite being such a resilient person, Linley’s eyes were moist. One could imagine how much pain he was in.

Even if he didn’t actively think about past events, the memories of his youth swam to him unbidden. He still remembered how the four of them had drank together and played together, laughing merrily. He still remembered how, in their dormitory, they chatted about the girls of the Institute. At that time, both Reynolds and Yale were very animated. Thinking back to Reynolds’ sloppy, lazy demeanor, Linley couldn’t help but feel even more miserable.

They had arrived at Count Wharton’s manor.

“Milord,” The gate guards said respectfully.

After staring at the estate, Linley then turned his head towards Delia. “Delia, you can go back for now.”

“Where are you going?” Delia asked questioningly. Hurriedly, she said,

“Linley, please don’t do anything rash.” Delia knew that given Linley’s current condition, it was possible that he might cause some sort of disastrous catastrophe.

Linley shook his head. “No, I’m just going to Reynolds’ home... the Dunstan clan!”

The Dunstan clan was also one of the oldest clans of the O’Brien Empire. In the army, the Dunstan clan had an extremely large amount of influence.

The Dunstan clan was located not too far from the imperial palace.

Using the Windshadow spell, Linley soared as gracefully as the wind itself through the streets of the city. Before most people even had a chance to notice Linley, he would have already moved a hundred meters past them.



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“Man, I told you to be careful and to not piss off the Madame. Jeeze...” Two guards of the Dunstan clan were talking to each other. One of them was laughing at another one.

The other guard nursed his face, which had a bright red handprint on it.

“I didn’t do anything to irritate her! Only, when the Madame arrived, I didn’t move back far enough, so the Madame yelled at me and gave me a slap. Damn, man. So not fair.”

“Don’t complain about fair or unfair. Young master Reynolds just died in battle. Whoever angers the Madame right now is asking for death.”

The two guards casually chatted, but suddenly, with a gust of wind, a human figure appeared in front of the gates to the Dunstan clan’s manor.

The two guards were startled.

“Might I ask who you are, milord?” one of the guards said.

“Go make a report and state that Linley wishes to meet with the leader of the Dunstan clan.” Linley’s voice was calm, but it had a certain penetrative, soul-shaking power.

“Master Linley?” The two guards exchanged glances, amazement in their eyes.

What sort of a person was Linley? He was one of the most powerful experts in the entire Yulan continent, on the same level as the Holy Emperor or Haydson.

The two guards immediately bowed deeply.

“Master Linley, please wait a moment. I will immediately go make the report.” One of the guards immediately ran at high speed inside the manor. Linley quietly waited there outside the gate, standing as straight and as stiff as a spear.

Shortly afterwards, three middle-aged men ran over at high speed. The leader of these three was the leader of the Dunstan clan, and Reynolds’ father: Neon Dunstan.

Neon Dunstan, upon learning that Linley had come, had immediately ran over to welcome him.

They knew that today was the day of Wharton’s grand wedding with Nina. But because of Reynolds’ death, the Dunstan clan was extremely depressed, which was why the Dunstan clan had not attended Wharton and Nina’s wedding banquet.

“Is this Master Linley?”

Neon Dunstan spied Linley from afar. Linley was an important figure of the world. Neon could sense at a single glance Linley’s astonishing presence.

This was a sort of spiritual pressure.

When experts trained to a certain level, their spirit and their soul would both transform. Saint-level experts, even if their clothes were tattered, would generally seem much more noble than most nobles.

Linley turned his head and saw Neon and the other two arrive.

When his electric gaze swept past the three men, all of them took a deep breath before warmly saying words of welcome. The clan leader, Neon, was the first to speak. “Master Linley, if there is anything you need, you could’ve sent someone for us. I would’ve personally come to speak with you. There was no

need to trouble you to come in person, Master Linley.”

Linley didn't mince words, immediately heading into the Dunstan clan's estate. He passed by those three people and headed directly inside.

Neon Dunstan and the others were puzzled, but they immediately followed him.

Given Linley's current understanding of the wind, he only needed a thought to activate the Windscout spell, allowing him to 'see' everything within several kilometers. As Linley walked into the main hall of the Dunstan clan, he saw that many people were already clustered there. All of them were men.

“Respectful greetings to Master Linley.” All of the men bowed respectfully to him.

Linley forced out a smile, then said, “Everyone, no need to be so courteous. I imagine everyone here knows why I have come today.”

Neon Dunstan and the others exchanged glances. All of them were stunned for quite a while.

“Reynolds is dead.” Linley's gaze swept the men surrounding him, his voice growing deep. “Reynolds was one of my best friends. We were as close as real brothers!”

Linley's voice filled the entire hall with a stifling aura.

“Right now, what I want to know is, how exactly did Fourth Bro die? Was it truly due to the so-called 'reason' of the soldiers of Neil City not being able to rescue him in time, resulting in him dying in battle?!” Linley's gaze came to a halt on Neon Dunstan.

Neon Dunstan sighed deeply. “Linley, Reynolds was my son. I am in great pain over his death. But there is nothing for it. In war, people will die. The Dunstan clan can't kick up a huge fuss and racket just because my son died. The Dunstan clan is a military clan. The original reason why we decided long ago to have every single son serve for ten years in the military was to make sure that they were all mentally prepared to die in service to their country. If they aren't able to be tempered like steel, how can they become of use?”

“I understand this.”

Linley looked calmly at Neon Dunstan. “To sacrifice one’s life for one’s homeland is nothing to be ashamed of. However... for some reason, I feel that Reynolds death in front of the walls of Neil City is something hard for me to believe. Could it be that Neil City didn’t have any experts present? Wouldn’t it be easy for them to simply jump down the city walls and rescue them?”

“Uncle Neon!” Linley stared fixedly at Neon Dunstan. “You must understand. My brother is dead. If he had died a glorious death in battle, I will only feel proud of him! But if he died a meaningless death, or died due to some other reason, then I must definitely find out everything there is to know about what happened to my dear brother!”

“If his death involved some other people who intentionally caused my brother to die? Then I will make them die as well!!!” Linley’s eyes were like daggers.

Neon and the others all felt their hearts tremble.

“Uncle Neon!” The way in which Linley had addressed him had caused Neon’s heart to quiver as well.

“Tell me. Your son. My brother. Did he die an unjust, meaningless death?” Linley stared at Neon Dunstan, waiting for his response.

A very complicated look was on Neon Dunstan’s face, but he looked directly at Linley and replied firmly, “Master Linley, thank you so much. However, my son died gloriously in battle. His death was not an unjust one!!!”

Linley swept everyone’s faces with his gaze.

“Then I bid you farewell.” Linley turned and immediately left the Dunstan clan.

Watching Linley depart, Neon Dunstan and the others all let out secret sighs of relief. Neon Dunstan immediately ordered in a bright voice, “Everyone, go back to your usual affairs.”

After speaking, Neon Dunstan immediately left the main hall and returned to his study.

“Reynolds... forgive your father!” As he walked, Neon’s eyes turned red.

Given the influence and power the Dunstan clan held within the military, they naturally knew exactly what had happened. Neon's son had done battle with the enemy for quite some time at the walls of Neil City before being killed. But Prince Julin had personally ordered that nobody was to open the city gates and rescue them.

His death had been an unjust one!

Neon's heart was filled with bitter tears. "Master Linley might kill Prince Julin in order to avenge you. But his Imperial Majesty dotes on Prince Julin very much. Although he wouldn't dare to seek revenge against Master Linley, he would definitely do so against the Dunstan clan."

There was nothing for it!

If a man was dead, he was dead. They had to act for the sake of the living!

The Cover-Up and the Truth

Linley returned to Count Wharton's manor. When he did, he locked himself into his courtyard, forbidding anyone from entering. Although it was Wharton and Nina's wedding, after learning that Reynolds had died in battle, Wharton knew how his Big Brother must be feeling right now.

Nobody in the Count's estate dared to go disturb Linley.

The courtyard door remained firmly shut.

Linley sat at a stone table. There was a single flask of wine and two wine cups on the table. One wine cup was in front of Linley; the other was opposite of him. Only... nobody was sitting opposite of Linley.

Linley poured wine into both of the cups, then raised one of them in a toast.

"Fourth Bro..." Linley stared straight ahead, his gaze seeming to pierce through the walls of reality. His eyes, however, were red. "Have a good journey."

Raising his head, Linley gulped the entire cup of wine down.

Fourth Bro had died.

Linley simply couldn't accept this.

But first he had interrogated Emperor Johann, and then he had interrogated the people of the Dunstan clan. He had even carefully inspected the expressions on the faces of the Dunstan clan's people. Linley had come to the conclusion...

That perhaps, his Fourth Bro truly had died a glorious death in battle. Perhaps it hadn't been anyone's fault at all.

But what Linley didn't know was that only the three or four core members of the Dunstan clan knew the truth. Neon Dunstan knew that Linley would pay attention to their expressions, which is why he hadn't told anyone else the

truth.

There was one other person who knew the truth. Reynolds' mother!

This was the so-called 'Madame' the guards had mentioned earlier. Reynolds' mother was heartbroken. Neon knew very well that in front of Linley, Reynolds' mother wouldn't be able to dissemble at all, which is why no women were present at all in the main hall. Naturally, Reynolds' mother hadn't been there either.

"Fourth Bro, you were the smallest of us four bros. I didn't expect that you would have been the first to depart." Linley's heart felt as though it had been stabbed by knives, and two trails of tears began to flow down uncontrollably.

Snatching the wine flask with his hands, Linley raised his head and began to drink.

"Cough, cough." After drinking so fast, Linley began to cough. But after coughing two or three times, Linley once again raised his head high and drank it all down.

Bebe and Haeru stood in the corner of the courtyard, not daring to disturb Linley at all.

"This is the fourth time the Boss has been so heartbroken," Bebe said to himself. The first time was when he had broken up with Alice. The second time was when he had learned of his father's death. The third time was when Grandpa Doebling had passed away...

Family members. Friends. One after the other, they had left him.

Linley felt great pain, but Linley knew... he had to be strong. Because he had other family members and other friends. He had to be strong, both for the sake of the dead as well as for the sake of the living.

"Let me just wallow in my misery for three days, then."

Linley painfully cracked his lips into a laugh. Then, without holding back at all, he cried as he wished, drank as he wished, laughed as he wished, mumbled as he wished, reminisced as he wished... or even spoke to Reynolds as though he were there.

Three days later!

“Creaaaaak.” The door to the courtyard swung open. Delia had been waiting outside the courtyard the entire time for the past few days, and had asked a servant to bring a stone bench over. She had been sitting there, reading as she quietly awaited Linley.

Three days!

Linley had shut himself in his courtyard for three days, and Delia had waited outside for three days.

Hearing the door creak open, Delia turned her head in surprised pleasure. Right now, Linley was dressed in a long, light blue robe. His back was still ramrod straight, and he didn’t look the slightest bit downtrodden.

“Linley...” Delighted, Delia immediately went over to welcome him.

Linley looked at Delia, and as he did, he felt a warm, thankful feeling in his heart. Given Linley’s current level, how could he have been unaware that Delia had been waiting outside for three full days?

Although he was inside the courtyard and was separated from Delia by a gate, Linley could sense Delia’s presence at all times.

Linley suddenly reached out and took Delia into his arms.

Delia was stunned.

Linley had never hugged her on his own accord before!

Holding Delia in his arms, Linley lowered his head. The tip of his nose brushed against Delia’s fragrant hair. The smell was so intoxicating. Smelling her scent, Linley felt his heart grow calmer.

It was as though a lonely little boat had finally reached a harbor.

“Delia. Thank you,” Linley’s voice sounded out next to Delia’s ear.

Hugging Linley and resting her head against Linley’s chest, Delia felt happier than she ever had been. She had spent years in the Institute hoping for this, then ten more years waiting... now, it seemed as though her dreams were closer than ever before.

After the day Linley exited the courtyard, him and Delia had drawn a step closer. Sometimes, they could tell what the other was thinking from a mere glance. Only, Linley didn't push past the final barriers between them, and Delia didn't try to do so on her own accord either.

"How is his Lordship doing?"

Gates spoke softly to Wharton in the training courtyard of the manor.

A hint of a smile was on Wharton's face. "After exiting his courtyard, my Big Brother's been quite close with Ms. Delia. When I saw him just now, he was even smiling. Most likely, he's feeling much better now."

Gates nodded slightly. "When his Lordship didn't leave for three days, it really was quite worrisome."

"Fifth brother, do you think his Lordship is like you, so easily abandoning himself to despair?" another terrifyingly large and powerful man nearby said with a laugh.

"Second brother, why are you criticizing me?" Gates said unhappily.

The Count's estate was very peaceful. Linley continued to live a life of quiet training, while at the same time, making his preparations to head out to the Anarchic Lands.



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"Your Imperial Majesty, Master Linley seems to be acting as he always has. He's focused on his training. There are no abnormal activities. But of course, on the day of Lord Wharton's wedding, Master Linley paid a visit to the Dunstan clan," the palace attendant reported respectfully.

Emperor Johann's face was covered with smiles.

"Wonderful. You can leave now," Emperor Johann said calmly.

Knowing that Linley hadn't acted out of the ordinary, Emperor Johann felt much relieved. "Fortunately. Fortunately, Linley really believed that what I said was the truth."

“The Dunstan clan knew how to act as well.” Emperor Johann was very satisfied.

He knew that given the influence the Dunstan clan had in the military, they definitely knew the truth of the matter. Most likely, they had found out about it even before Emperor Johann himself had.

But clearly, Linley hadn’t learned anything from his trip to the Dunstan clan, and truly believed that Reynolds had died in battle, with the soldiers of Neil City unable to rescue him.



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Delia stared at a letter in her hands, then stared at Linley. She had a miserable look on her face.

“Delia, what is it?” Linley looked questioningly at Delia.

Delia shook her head helplessly. “This is a letter from my parents. They say that my grandmother is seriously ill, and want me to go home immediately. My grandmother...” A worried, sad look was on Delia’s face.

Linley reached out to hold Delia’s hand. Staring at Delia, he consoled her, “Don’t worry. Your grandmother will be fine.”

“Linley, I have to rush home.” Delia looked helplessly at Linley. “I had planned to go with you to the Anarchic Lands, but now...”

Linley smiled and consoled her, “It is fine. You go home first. Given my squad’s abilities, we should be able to quickly set up a base in the Anarchic Lands. In the future, when you come looking for me, it will be easy to find me.”

Delia looked at Linley, unwilling to part from him.

But her grandmother was seriously ill. Her parents’ letter had made her extremely worried. There was nothing she could do... she could only choose to leave and return to the Yulan Empire.

The next morning, Delia mounted on the back of the Wildthunder Stormhawk and flew directly back to the Yulan Empire.



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Within a prefectural city in the Central Administrative Province of the O'Brien Empire. Within a courtyard owned by a high, luxurious hotel. Yale was casually flipping through a number of letters he had received.

"Hrm? Something about Fourth Bro? What happened to Fourth Bro? Can it be that he rendered military merit and is about to be promoted?" A hint of a smile was on Yale's face.

In the past, of the four bros, Yale and Reynolds were both the playboy types. They had chased after girls together. The two of them had acted degenerately together, while George and Linley had been rather self-controlled.

Opening the letter, Yale began to read.

And as he did...

Yale's face immediately turned white. His body suddenly began to shake uncontrollably. Yale held his head in his hands and closed his eyes. After a long time... Yale finally opened his eyes.

His face was totally ashen. Not a hint of blood could be seen.

"Impossible."

Moisture could be seen in Yale's eyes. Soon, they turned red. Forcibly swallowing the grief in his heart, Yale continued to read.

After finishing...

"Fourth Bro!!!!" Yale's tears began to flow.

If one was to ask Yale who were the people that he cared the most about? It definitely wouldn't be his older biological brother. The relationship between them was relatively cold. After all, within the Dawson Conglomerate... there were many struggles and much infighting.

In the ten years after leaving the Ernst Institute, although Yale had come to trust some people, he hadn't truly treated any of them as lifelong friends. In his heart, there were only three lifelong friends. The three he had made in his

youth.

George. Linley. Reynolds!

Yale stood there, his entire body shaking uncontrollably. Suddenly, a flash of electricity appeared in his hands, turning the letter into ash.

Yale was a lightning-style magus. He was the weakest of the four bros, having only reached the level of magus of the sixth rank.

“Prince... Julin?” Yale ground his teeth, his entire body still shaking.

“You actually just stood there and watched, and let my brother die!!! I don’t care who you are. I will make sure you die!” Yale took a deep breath, closing his eyes.

He forced himself to calm down.

The Dawson Conglomerate was very influential amongst the common-folk, and border cities such as Neil City were cities that the Dawson Conglomerate viewed as being of great importance. The merchants and nobles there had many dealings with the Dawson Conglomerate.

Perhaps this secret could be kept from Linley, but there was no way they could keep this secret from the pervasive, world-spanning Dawson Conglomerate!

“There is no way that father would mobilize the forces of the Conglomerate to deal with a prince for my sake. In addition, even if he tried to, he wouldn’t necessarily be successful.” Yale understood this.

Prince Julin was the administrator for the Southeast Administrative Province. He controlled a huge number of soldiers. How could the Dawson Conglomerate fight against him?

“Third Bro!” Suddenly, Linley came to Yale’s mind, unbidden.

“Third Bro hasn’t avenged Fourth Bro yet?” Yale knew very well how much each of the four of them cared about the others. He was certain that if Linley knew why Reynolds had died, he would definitely go seek revenge. “It must be that Prince Julin and that Emperor-whatever hid this from him. Third Bro doesn’t have an intelligence network.”

Whenever Yale thought of that adorable youngster who had followed him around and drank and dallied alongside him at the Jadewater Paradise, he felt bitter pain in his heart.

“Fourth Bro, I promise you, Third Bro and I will definitely avenge you,” Yale murmured to himself.

Suddenly, Yale roared loudly. “Attend me! Make preparations for me immediately. I am going to the imperial capital right now. Quick! I am going immediately!”

In just five short minutes, Yale was mounted atop a fine stallion, with two guards by his side. He rushed towards the imperial capital at full gallop. On the way, Yale stopped for nothing, travelling day and night, neither eating nor drinking.

On the way to the imperial capital, he switched horses at several cities, continuing to make haste towards the imperial capital at full gallop.

After two days and one night, Yale and his men managed to arrive at the imperial capital. Due to his high-speed journey, both of Yale’s eyes were bloodshot, and his face was so ashen and pale that it looked like the face of someone who was seriously ill.

“We’re here.”

From far away, Yale saw Count Wharton’s manor. After two days and a night of travelling, Yale finally felt a glimmer of hope.

“Lord Yale?” The guards at the manor naturally recognized Yale. In the past, Yale had often come to visit Linley. There was no need for them to make any report before letting Yale enter. Only, the two guards were puzzled as to why Yale looked so haggard.

“Third Bro!”

Yale charged into the manor, then began shouting at the top of his lungs, “Third Bro, come out! Third Bro, quick, come out!!!” As soon as Linley heard Yale’s first shout, he immediately ran at high speed out of his courtyard.

Seeing the distant Yale, Linley was stunned.

Right now, Yale's face was extremely pale, and his hair was an absolute mess. Was this the impeccably dressed, handsome, and cheerful Boss Yale?

Seeing Linley, Yale immediately ran over, grabbing Linley by the shoulders. His bloodshot eyes stared at Linley, and he said in a sobbing voice, "Third Bro, you absolutely must get revenge for Fourth Bro!"

The Secrets of the Yulan Continent

These words stunned Linley.

Get revenge? For what?

“Wait a second!” Linley immediately understood. Fourth Bro had indeed died an unjust death.

Linley grabbed Yale by the arms. “Boss Yale, calm down. Come. Come to my place. Tell me everything you know in detail.”

Yale nodded slightly.

They arrived in Linley’s courtyard.

“What were the circumstances around Fourth Bro’s death?” Linley’s face was extremely serious.

Yale said with solemnity, “Third Bro, that day, Fourth Bro had led his men in a scouting mission outside the city. Who would’ve thought that they would encounter the soldiers of the Rohault Empire? Fourth Bro was vastly outnumbered. Despite going all out, only himself and a few dozen of his men escaped. Fourth Bro and his dozens of men fled to Neil City, and at that time, only three hundred enemies were pursuing them.”

“Three hundred?” Linley simply couldn’t believe it.

“Right. But simply because the Rohault Empire’s soldiers fired an arrow at the wall near where Prince Julin was currently standing, Prince Julin was terrified. He immediately ordered that nobody was to be allowed to open the city gates. He ordered his men to only stand guard inside the city. This was done solely to protect himself. As for Fourth Bro and his men, they kept on screaming angrily, ‘Open the gates!’, but nobody dared to do so... and just like that, Fourth Bro and his men were all slaughtered.”

Linley’s heart was beginning to blaze with fury.

He could see the scene as if he himself was there. His Fourth Bro had miserably screamed for them to 'Open the gates!', but Prince Julin had forcibly ordered people not to open the gates. Nobody dared to go rescue them either.

And so, Fourth Bro had died.

His death was an unjust one, a pointless one. He didn't have to die!

"Where is Fourth Bro's body?" Linley immediately asked.

Yale said in agony, "According to our Conglomerate's intelligence network, Fourth Bro was hit by an arrow on the shoulder, and then the enemy used a warblade to slash open his chest. Fourth Bro collapsed at the corner of the walls. And then, the leader of the enemy soldiers took Fourth Bro's corpse away as a spoil of war."

"What?!" Linley couldn't believe it. "Three hundred people before the gates of Neil City. Not only did the guarding forces not attack, they even allowed the enemies to take away Fourth Bro's corpse?"

This was an absolute joke.

"Precisely speaking, the large majority of those three hundred soldiers stayed outside of bow range. The real attackers only numbered ten or so. Those ten experts didn't care about arrows at all." Yale's heart was filled with bitter pain. "Those ten or so experts killed Fourth Bro, then took his corpse away... but given Prince Julin's orders, none of the guard soldiers dared to venture out to do battle."

The soldiers of the O'Brien Empire were extremely disciplined and would follow orders.

But such laughable orders, in all honesty, were extremely hard to accept for them.

"Fourth Bro..." In Linley's mind, he could see the scene of how his Fourth Bro had angrily, desperately, screamed 'Open the gates!' outside the walls of Neil City, but the soldiers atop the walls had coldly refused to do so.

Such an unjust death filled Linley's heart with endless rage.

Fourth Bro shouldn't have died at all!

“Johann and the Dunstan clan both dared to deceive me.” Linley, knowing the truth, immediately understood that most likely, the Dunstan clan had done so due to their fear of offending Prince Julin and Emperor Johann.

“So it turns out that this was all due to that Prince Julin!” Linley’s rage was building.

He had heard of Prince Julin long ago. Emperor Johann was famous for his bias and partiality, and had made his incompetent younger brother the administrator of an Administrative Province. From this alone, one could tell how much Emperor Johann doted on his younger brother.

“Third Bro, only you are capable of avenging Fourth Bro,” Yale said with pained fury.

Yale’s heart was filled with self-reproach. He, too, wanted to avenge his Fourth Bro, but he personally was simply too weak, and the Dawson Conglomerate didn’t belong to him.

Linley nodded, a cold light shining forth from his eyes. “Since that Prince Julin caused Fourth Bro’s death, then he definitely must die.” Linley turned to stare at Yale. “Yale, take a rest. I need to make a trip.”

“What are you going to do? Are you going to act against him now?”

“No.”

Linley slowly, calmly shook his head. “If I were to directly kill Prince Julin, most likely that Emperor Johann would revenge himself upon the Dunstan clan... Fourth Bro is already dead. I don’t wish for his clan to collapse as well.”



*

War God Mountain.

Linley stood in front of the tunnel that led to the War God’s training area, quietly waiting. Right at this moment, someone flew towards him at high speed. It was Castro.

“Linley, what are you doing here?” Castro questioned.

“I wish to see the War God,” Linley replied.

Castro nodded. “If that’s the case, then let me report your arrival.” But right at this moment, a voice rang out next to Castro and Linley’s ears at the same time. “Linley. Come in.”

Linley had already prepared the Windshadow spell, and so he flew into the tunnel. Those familiar, winding pathways led him deeper into the tunnels until he arrived at the pit. He dropped down several thousand meters, arriving at the bottom.

A few moments later, Linley arrived at that pitch-black stone door.

“Rumble.” That terrifying heat was still there, turning the stone walls scarlet red.

Linley said respectfully, “Lord War God, I imagine that you already know about my duel with Haydson. I imagine that I should now be qualified to learn of the secrets you previously spoke about.”

“Enter, then,” the War God’s calm voice rang out.

“Rumble...” The pitch-black stone door swung open on its own, revealing a tunnel within. A terrifying blast of heat blasted out from within.

Linley formed his Dragonblood battle-qi into his Pulseguard Defense.

“What a hot place.” Staring deep into the tunnel, Linley was astonished. On the far end of the tunnel, Linley saw an enormous magma pool that was at least a hundred meters wide. The lava boiled and hissed and swirled about, but this wasn’t the astonishing part.

The astonishing part was... in the air directly above the magma pool, there was a ball of fire at least three meters long.

This ball of fire was pure, scarlet red. It was constantly emanating waves of terrifying heat from mid-air. For Linley to be forced to use the Pulseguard Defense to protect himself, one could imagine how terrifyingly hot this ball of fire was.

The temperature of ordinary lava wouldn’t be able to hurt Linley, even if he went near it.

Even if he were to walk on top of lava, all he had to do was to control his battle-qi to protect himself. There was no need to use the Pulseguard Defense. Linley suddenly realized something...

“Where is Lord War God?” Linley looked suspiciously in every direction.

In the blink of an eye, he could make out the surrounding area. Aside from the central pool of lava, everything could be seen clearly in this area. But there wasn't a human figure in sight.

“Linley!” the War God's calm voice suddenly drifted down from within the ball of fire.

Linley stared in astonishment at that hovering ball of fire.

Could it be that the War God was that ball of fire?

A blurry human figure slowly drifted out from within that ball of fire. In the blink of an eye, that blurry human figure appeared next to the pool of magma.

This man was indeed the War God.

Linley carefully inspected this War God, whose legend was known throughout the Yulan continent. The War God wasn't an extremely tall man, only around 1.8 meters tall or so. He had the appearance of a man in his thirties. He had thick eyebrows and scarlet red hair that had grown to his waist. Due to his careful observations, Linley suddenly realized that atop the War God's scarlet red hair were multiple blazing flames.

The War God's face was as hard and cold as granite, and his eyes were extremely sharp.

With every single action, he radiated absolute certainty. In particular, he possessed a terrifying presence that caused Linley's heart to quiver.

Such power!

“Respectful greetings to you, War God,” Linley said courteously.

The War God carefully looked at Linley, a hint of a smile appearing at the corners of his lips. He nodded calmly. “Not bad. I watched your duel with Haydson. Your attack technique is quite interesting.”

A hint of a smile appeared on Linley's face as well.

"Lord War God, I should now be qualified to learn about the secrets of the Yulan continent, right?" Linley had already decided long ago that before heading out to the Anarchic Lands, he would come visit the War God once.

And now, he had to seek vengeance for his Fourth Bro as well.

Linley had already made careful calculations. After avenging his Fourth Bro, he would immediately head out for the Anarchic Lands. In addition, this meeting with the War God wasn't solely for the sake of learning the secrets. It was also to use the War God's influence to suppress Johann.

Who did Johann fear the most? Without question, it was the War God!

"Linley, the attack you have developed is quite unique indeed. Your current level of power is indeed on par with Haydson, and is enough to qualify you to be made aware of the secrets of the Yulan continent," The War God said calmly.

Linley listened carefully.

"Linley, do you know how I became a Deity?" The War God suddenly looked at Linley.

"Wasn't it through gaining sufficient insight which allowed you to break through the limits of the Saint level and reach the Deity level?" Linley looked at the War God, puzzled.

The War God shook his head slightly. "It isn't so easy to break through to the Deity level. Even Cesar, with his extraordinary talent, spent five thousand years before reaching the Deity level. As for me... although in the past, I had indeed reached the limits of the Saint level, it was very hard to take that last step and break through. Five thousand years ago, during a battle, I was fortunate enough to acquire the divine spark of a Demigod. I absorbed and fused that divine spark... and thus, I became a Deity."

Linley was stunned.

So the almighty War God whom everyone praised to the high heavens had actually broken through because he had acquired the divine spark of a Demigod.

“What, are you very disappointed?” The War God laughed calmly.

Linley shook his head. “No. It is very incredible that in the past, you were able to reach the limits of the Saint level after only a few hundred years. Your eldest disciple, Fain, has spent thousands of years training. By now, he should be at the limits of the Saint level as well.”

The War God laughed.

He was very satisfied with Linley’s response. Indeed, reaching the limits of the Saint level in a few centuries was extremely difficult.

“It is hard to reach the limits of the Saint level. For someone to reach the limits of the Saint level definitely means that they have already arrived at the very end of the path of the Elemental Laws they have chosen. To break past that barrier, what they need is a sudden insight! In an instant, they must fuse together and combine every part of the aspect of Elemental Law they are training in. Only then will they succeed in breaking through.”

The War God sighed, “In the entire Yulan continent, up until a few decades ago, there had been six Prime Saints who had reached the limits of the Saint level and only needed to take one more step before breaking through to the Deity level. Now that Cesar has broken through, there are five Prime Saints remaining who are at the limits. One of them is Fain.”

“Currently, in the Yulan continent, aside from those five Deities, the most powerful people are Fain and the other four. You should already know by now how powerful Fain is.”

Linley nodded slightly.

Linley was now beginning to truly interact with the hidden aspects of the Yulan continent.

“Lord War God, what level of power does the Holy Emperor have, in comparison with those hidden experts?” In the future, Linley would definitely have to deal with the Holy Emperor. Naturally, he needed to ask this question.

“The Holy Emperor?”

The War God paused for a moment, then said, “Amongst the hidden experts

of the continent, aside from the Deities, Fain and the other four Prime Saints are the most powerful. They need only a single step to reach the Deity level. Beneath them are the likes of the Holy Emperor. There are roughly ten or so people on this level. Below them are those people on Haydson's level. Most of the experts who lie hidden here in the continent are on Haydson's level.

"The Holy Emperor is more powerful than Haydson?" Linley memorized this little fact.

The War God cast a warning glance at Linley. "The Holy Emperor trains in Oracular Magic. Oracular Magic is extremely powerful. It is normal for him to be on a higher level than Haydson."

Linley looked at the War God, then asked, "Lord War God, then what are the secrets of the Yulan continent? What are they?" Linley had been curious this entire time.

For what reason had the Yulan continent attracted so many experts to remain here on this plane?

"In the Four Higher Planes, there is another name for the plane of the Yulan continent." A hint of delight was in the War God's face.

"What name?" Linley's eyes lit up.

"The Necropolis of the Gods!" the War God said softly.

"The Necropolis of the Gods?" Linley's heart thumped. "Lord War God, even if Deities were to die, there's no reason they would have to come to our Yulan continent to be buried, is there?"

"Of course not." The War God laughed calmly. "Five thousand years ago, many of the experts who descended from other planes were Deities. There were even Gods and Highgods. They engaged in warfare and slaughter here in the Yulan continent. In the end, aside from a few who left, virtually all of those experts died here."

The War God's Favor

“During one of those battles, I was extremely lucky. Although I had hidden far away, I managed to acquire a divine spark, and what’s more, it was the divine spark of a Demigod. If it had been the divine spark of a full God, I wouldn’t have been able to absorb and fuse with it at all.” The War God laughed calmly.

Linley suddenly began to understand.

There were certain preconditions for one to fuse with a divine spark.

Someone who had not yet become a Deity probably would only be able to fuse with a Demigod’s divine spark.

“Why did those experts from other planes descend to the Yulan continent and engage in battle here?” Linley immediately asked.

The War God glanced at Linley. “For now, you don’t need to know about this.” Clearly, the War God didn’t wish to tell Linley.

Linley had no choice but to remain silent.

“The Necropolis of the Gods will be opened once every thousand years. Each time it is opened, those who have received acknowledgment and permission from us Deities are permitted to enter the Necropolis of the Gods and engage in exploration.” The War God glanced at Linley. “But I must tell you, the Necropolis of the Gods is extremely dangerous!”

“Has anyone ever succeeded?” Linley asked.

“Of course,” The War God said with certainty. “But only one person. And the funny thing was, as soon as he acquired a Demigod divine spark and broke through, he immediately headed off to the Higher Planes.”

Linley secretly laughed.

To become a Deity was extremely hard.

But wouldn't it be so much simpler to just acquire a divine spark from within the Necropolis of the Gods and then fuse it? No wonder so many of the lucky survivors of the past had decided to remain hidden here in the Yulan continent.

After all, it was virtually impossible for a Saint to acquire a divine spark in the Higher Planes.

"Lord War God, are there any differences between becoming a Deity through fusing with a divine spark and becoming a Deity through personal understandings and breakthroughs?" Linley asked.

The War God nodded and sighed. "There are. After absorbing and fusing with a divine spark, one's future training becomes much more difficult. After all, the divine spark you fused with wasn't one that had naturally descended upon you and formed within your soul. There are qualitative differences."

Linley nodded.

In his heart, Linley deeply appreciated the fact that the War God had provided him with this important piece of information.

"But despite that, so what? Linley, if I placed a divine spark in front of you and told you that if you fused with it, you would become a Demigod, with the price being that your future training would be slower and more difficult... would you be willing to fuse with it?" The War God looked at Linley.

Linley was startled.

Indeed. If a Demigod's divine spark was placed in front of him, which represented the chance to become a Deity, despite knowing that one's future training would become more difficult... most likely, many people would choose to immediately absorb and fuse with the divine spark.

"Enough. Linley, if there's nothing else, you can leave now," The War God said calmly.

Linley hurriedly said. "Lord War God, in a few days, I plan to go to the Anarchic Lands. My little brother Wharton will probably remain in the imperial capital. I am worried that the forces of the Radiant Church will threaten my

little brother...”

“Don’t worry. The imperial capital is not a place where the Radiant Church can act as they please,” the War God said calmly.

Hearing these words from the War God, Linley felt calmer.

“Lord War God, the current Emperor, Johann...” Linley didn’t even finish speaking before the War God frowned and said, “I gave you my talisman. Just show it to Johann, and he will know that it represents my authority. Each generation of Emperors knows this.”

Linley was startled.

The talisman with the word ‘War’ on it which the War God had bequeathed unto him previously actually had this function as well?

The War God glanced coldly at Linley. “But you had better not use the talisman too wildly. If you throw the Empire into a state of chaos, then you will be the one to fix it. Oh, right. When you go to the Anarchic Lands, there is a person you must remember not to offend.”

“Who?” Linley was startled.

The Anarchic Lands didn’t have any famous experts, right?

The War God said calmly, “One of the five Prime Saints lives in the Anarchic Lands. His name is Desri. He trains in the Laws of Light. His power is on par with Fain’s.”

Linley immediately memorized this name.

Someone who was on par with Fain was a person who was only a step away from becoming a Deity.

“Enough. You can leave now,” the War God said dismissively.

Linley immediately bowed, then turned and prepared to leave.

“Remember to treat with kindness that magical beast of yours, Bebe,” the War God said with a sudden sigh.

Shocked, Linley turned his head to stare at the War God. Linley wasn’t surprised that the War God knew of Bebe’s existence, but why had the War God

just told him to treat Bebe well?

The War God paid no more attention to Linley. With one step, his scarlet hair flowing around him, he entered that hovering ball of fire once more and returned to his training.

“Bebe?”

Linley actually felt that the War God was being a bit too nice to him. Whether it was with regards to Wharton’s wedding, or telling him so many things on this visit... Linley now felt that this had to do with Bebe.

Bebe?

Linley still remembered how Bebe had told him that he came from a clan known as the ‘Beirut’ clan.

“Bebe’s power is terrifying, and his rate of growth is astonishing as well. And he comes from the Beirut clan. Now, the War God says...” Linley suddenly began to question Bebe’s identity.

The imperial capital of Channe. The imperial palace. Within the flower gardens.

Emperor Johann was in a wonderful mood. He leisurely strolled about in his flower gardens, enjoying the sight of all sorts of beautiful flowers. With Linley no longer looking into Reynolds’ affair, he naturally felt much more relaxed.

“Your Imperial Majesty, someone is flying over,” his personal attendant said suddenly.

Someone was flying over?

A Saint-level expert!

Emperor Johann immediately turned to look. In the skies, he saw a blue-robed Linley soaring in his direction. In the blink of an eye, Linley arrived in the flower gardens.

“Oh, so it is Master Linley.” A smile immediately blossomed on Emperor Johann’s face. “Is there something you need, Master Linley?”

Linley glanced at the palace attendant.

“Leave for now,” Emperor Johann said to his nearby attendant, who immediately walked far into the distance. Now there was only Linley and Emperor Johann, with no one else nearby. Even the guards were over a hundred meters away.

Linley stared emotionlessly at Emperor Johann.

Stared at by Linley in such a manner, Emperor Johann began to feel puzzled and uneasy. Could it be that Linley had discovered that Reynolds’ death had to do with Julin?

“Emperor Johann, do you still believe that you’ve told me the complete truth regarding Reynolds’ dying in battle?” Linley stared at Emperor Johann.

Emperor Johann’s heart immediately plummeted. He felt as though he had suddenly fallen into a bottomless abyss.

Emperor Johann was no fool. Hearing Linley’s words, he naturally could guess that Linley perhaps already knew everything.

“Linley, that was the report that came from the military. It shouldn’t be fake,” Emperor Johann said seriously. The meaning of his words was clear; even if the information was wrong, it was the fault of the military reporters, and didn’t have anything to do with him, Johann.

Linley glanced at Emperor Johann.

“Emperor Johann, based on what I have learned, my dear friend Reynolds had led a group of knights in a scouting trip, but had been pursued by the forces of the Rohault Empire to the walls of the City of Neil. The pursuing forces of the Rohault Empire numbered only three hundred! But at that time, Prince Julin actually ordered the soldiers to stay put and guard the city from inside, out of fear!”

The look on Johann’s face changed.

“Faced with three hundred people, why would a garrison of tens of thousands of soldiers have to stand their ground inside the City of Neil?” Linley’s voice grew even colder. “My brother, Reynolds, and his dozens of subordinates were shouting for the gates to be opened from the base of the walls. But Prince Julin actually ordered that the gates were to remain shut. And thus like that...

Reynolds and his men lost their lives, for no purpose whatsoever!"

Linley stared coldly at Johann. "Emperor Johann. Tell me. How should we resolve this affair?"

Emperor Johann already knew that there was no way to favorably resolve this situation. He didn't dare to lie or to equivocate. In front of a peak-stage Saint, would excuses be of any use?

Johann's face turned steely. "Julin, that bastard!"

Johann looked at Linley with fury in his eyes. "Master Linley, We had no idea that Julin actually did something like this. He has brought utter shame upon our Empire. Master Linley, please don't worry. We guarantee you that We will definitely take severe actions to censure him. Tomorrow, no, immediately, We shall send our senior ministers to go to the Southeast Administrative Province and strictly investigate this matter. We definitely will not let off anyone who committed any major crimes with a light punishment!"

Linley had seen through Johann's little ploy from the very beginning.

Johann would 'send someone'?

Even if they discovered anything, they wouldn't find Prince Julin guilty of any serious crime.

"Your Imperial Majesty, no need to trouble yourself. Whoever caused my brother to die, I shall make them die." Linley's voice was cold and fierce, causing Johann's heart to quiver.

But Emperor Johann was frantic as well.

Linley was actually saying he was going to directly kill Julin! He was going to go kill Johann's brother? He, Johann, only had a single brother. What was Reynolds? Nothing more than a common noble. If he died, he died.

How could Reynolds' life compare to Johann's brother's life?

"Linley, the Empire has our imperial laws," Emperor Johann said in a cold voice.

For his little brother's sake, he had decided to try and face Linley head on for once.

Linley looked at Emperor Johann. With a cold, calm voice, he said, “Dare I ask, according to military law, what is the punishment for someone who is afraid to do battle against an enemy of just three hundred soldiers, and even stands by and does nothing as his own soldiers are slaughtered?”

“The penalty is indeed death.” Johann nodded. “However, an investigation is still needed to find out exactly what happened.”

Linley glanced at Johann. “What happened is quite clear. I’ve only come to inform you of what I am going to do. Johann... do not press your luck. Do not think you can use worldly laws to bind and restrict me.”

Saint-level experts were indeed free of worldly laws and restrictions.

Emperor Johann stared at Linley. Suddenly, he said in a soft, begging voice, “Linley, you have a little brother as well. You should understand how I feel.”

“Haha...” Linley laughed loudly. “Your Imperial Majesty, it seems you are suggesting that so long as one has an older brother, then they can kill any of my brothers with impunity, and then have their older brother say to me, ‘You have a little brother as well’? And then let me pardon their little brother?”

Linley’s face was so cold, it seemed like a layer of frost was covering it. “How laughable!”

It was indeed laughable. Someone had killed his bro, and now was trying to stir up sympathy by talking about the relationship between older and younger brothers.

“Linley, you...” Emperor Johann was furious.

“Johann, I hope that you won’t let yourself act rashly. Otherwise...” With a flip of his hand, Linley retrieved the scarlet talisman that the War God had given him.

Emperor Johann, upon seeing the talisman in Linley’s hands, seemed to have had a bucket of ice water poured onto his head. His entire body began to shake.

“The War God’s Talisman?” Johann stared disbelievingly at the talisman.

After the founding of the O’Brien Empire, the War God, O’Brien, had abdicated and given the throne to his son, who had passed it down over time to

future generations. Every generation of Emperors knew that the War God's Talisman represented the War God himself!

Whosoever held this War God's Talisman even had the power to force the Emperor to abdicate!

Naturally, very few people were in possession of the War God's Talisman, and those people wouldn't dare to falsify an order from the War God.

"It's good that you recognize the War God's Talisman." Linley looked calmly at Emperor Johann. "Emperor Johann, I don't care about the fact that you don't handle affairs with impartiality. I, Linley, am not the sort of person to consider myself the epitome of honor and righteousness. However, don't try to put on any airs around me and restrict me. I won't offend others, but I don't wish for others to offend me either."

"Also. I do not wish to see you scheme against or act against the Dunstan clan, the clan of my friend Reynolds," Linley said calmly. And then, Linley immediately took to the air and flew off towards the east.

Johann watched as Linley flew eastwards.

He knew... that Linley was heading to the Southeast Administrative Province to go kill his younger brother. But did he dare to stop him? Right now, Johann didn't even dare to try and verbally argue with Linley.

He was the Emperor, true.

But who had given him his authority? The War God! A single word from the War God could force him to abdicate. By then, he, Johann, wouldn't have any authority at all. The loss of his younger brother's life, or the loss of his Imperial power... which was more important?

Johann chose himself.

The wind blew with dreary force as Linley flew at high speed towards the Southeast Administrative Province. At this time, a black light suddenly flew towards him at high speed from the imperial capital, soon reaching Linley's side. It was Bebe!

"Boss, how'd it go?" Bebe asked.

“Although Johann dotes on his little brother, he values his Imperial power even more. I didn’t have to say anything. All I did was take out the War God’s Talisman, and he no longer dared to make a sound.” Linley chuckled.

Worldly power?

That was nothing more than secondary, and bequeathed upon you by others at that. Only true personal power, developed by training, was truly effective. No wonder the War God didn’t want to be Emperor, but instead spent his time in quiet training.

Linley and Bebe, the man and the magical beast, flew east at high speed, and in the blink of an eye disappeared into the eastern horizon.

The Corpse

If Reynolds was alive, he wanted to see him. If Reynolds was dead, he wanted to see Reynolds' corpse!

From Yale, Linley had learned that Reynolds' corpse had actually been taken away by the enemy. On this trip, no matter what, he had to bring his friend's corpse back. However, before that, Linley had to pay a visit to Neil City. After all, the soldiers of Neil City should have known exactly what happened on the day Reynolds was killed.

"Boss, don't be too heartbroken," Bebe said softly.

Linley stared at the distant horizon, then turned to glance at Bebe, forcing out a smile. "Bebe, I'm fine." But it was hard to make out any expressions on the face of the Dragonformed Linley; all that could be seen was the corners of his lips curving slightly.

After flying for a while, the distant Neil City appeared in the desolate landscape.

"We're arriving." The temperature around Linley suddenly dropped by a level.

The army of the O'Brien Empire was currently camped a few dozen kilometers outside Neil City. Ten kilometers away, facing them, was the army of the Rohault Empire. The two armies stared at each other.

After Prince Julin had left the city, the Golden Flame Legion had quickly exacted revenge for Reynolds. But the Rohault Empire had been prepared already, and they wouldn't lower their heads either. The two armies had engaged in multiple engagements, with tens of thousands of casualties. They were now at a temporary halt, but the next attack could come at any moment.

Right now, the garrison of Neil City was fairly relaxed. After all, there was an army of tens of thousands in front of them.

“Man, that Prince-whatever was such a coward. He let the enemy make it all the way to our walls, and didn’t even let us go out.” A couple of garrison guards were huddled together in a corner of the walls, chatting idly.

“What a tragedy. Senior Captain Reynolds died such an unjust death, and even his corpse was taken away.”

The Golden Flame Legion was, without question, an extremely elite legion. What happened last time at the walls of Neil City was, without a doubt, a mark of shame for the entire Golden Flame Legion. But the military commanders at that time hadn’t dared to disobey the orders of Prince Julin.

“Who are you?!” Suddenly, terrified, angry shouts could be heard from outside. One soldier after another stopped resting in their cubbyholes and came out, but when they saw the Dragonformed person standing in mid-air, wrapped within a cocoon of azurish-black mist, they were all stunned.

They were elite soldiers, elite soldiers who constantly lived on the line between life and death.

But when they saw this expert standing in mid-air, they understood that this aberration was definitely a Saint-level expert. These soldiers didn’t have any ability to fight against him at all.

“You... you are Master Linley?” Suddenly, a military officer whispered these words.

The eyes of the surrounding elite soldiers suddenly lit up. Linley’s Dragonformed appearance had become the stuff of legends. Those elite warriors carefully inspected the cloud-shrouded Linley’s appearance. Indeed, he looked very much like how the legends said he did.

“It is I,” a dark whisper drifted out from within that azurish-black mist.

Master Linley. A genius magus. A grandmaster sculptor. A peak-stage Saint. The pride of the entire O’Brien Empire... countless people in the Empire worshipped Linley. After realizing that this aberration was Linley, the surrounding warriors actually began to feel that Linley’s transformation was extremely ‘manly’ and very ‘ferocious’.

These were valiant warriors indeed.

“Master Linley, if there is anything you need, please just ask us,” the military officer hurriedly said.

“A while ago, a group of your scouts were encountered and attacked by the Rohault Empire’s forces, and were chased all the way to the city walls. The senior captain of that group was named Reynolds, correct?” Linley’s voice was hoarse.

The military officer said, “Yes, Master Linley.”

All of the surrounding soldiers felt a deep sense of humiliation. Even Master Linley had learned of the Golden Flame Legion’s shame. All of them felt extremely awkward and embarrassed.

“Where is Reynolds’ corpse?” Linley asked.

“Master Linley, Lord Reynolds’ corpse was taken away by the enemies.” The military officer’s face was turning a bit green. He truly felt ashamed. Before their very eyes, three hundred people had not only killed Reynolds and his men, they had even taken away Reynolds’ corpse.

Linley asked, “Who here personally witnessed what had happened on that day?”

Many people looked at each other. These people had only heard of what happened to Reynolds. That squad of soldiers who had been on the walls and had personally witnessed what had happened had all been punished and sent to the front lines to do battle with the enemies.

Seeing the expression on their faces, Linley frowned.

“I... I witnessed it,” an ancient-sounding voice rang out from behind. All of the soldiers parted, allowing a lavishly dressed old man walk over. This old man was the governor of Neil City.

“Lord Governor!” All the surrounding soldiers bowed respectfully.

Staring at Linley and the azurish-black cloud surrounding him, the city governor sighed secretly. As the city governor of a border city like Neil City, how could he possibly be a soft, spineless person? At that time, he had been accompanying Prince Julin. When he had seen Reynolds and the others being

pursued, he was just about to order his men to go rescue them.

But at that time, Prince Julin's attitude clearly showed that he would not permit anyone to go outside. They had to stand their ground inside the walls! The city governor was already quite old, and he had sons and grandsons. He didn't dare to disobey the order of Prince Julin.

"You are the city governor of Neil City? Good. Clearly explain to me what happened that day when Reynolds was pursued here and killed," Linley said coldly.

The city governor nodded. "When Reynolds and his men fled here, they had all been wounded. There was an arrow sticking out from Reynolds' shoulders. When they reached the walls, ten or so experts of the enemy came rushing over, ignoring the arrows of the garrison troops as they immediately began to slaughter Reynolds and the others. Reynolds was slashed to death by a blow to his chest, and then the leader of the enemy forces took him away."

Linley secretly nodded to himself.

The Dawson Conglomerate's intelligence was indeed accurate.

"The leader of the enemies? Do you know where he is?" Linley stared at the city governor of Neil. "I must find and reclaim Reynolds' corpse."

The city governor of Neil nodded. "Right now, the legions of the Rohault Empire are currently in a deadlock against our legion. They are located a few dozen kilometers outside of Neil City. I imagine their leader is there as well. Right... the leader should be a warrior of the eighth rank."

"Oh..."

Linley turned to stare towards the south. He could clearly smell the scent of battle and blood in that direction. The bloody scent created by the deaths of tens of thousands was extremely thick!

"Bebe, let's go."

"Boom!" A terrifying sonic boom could be heard as Linley and Bebe, the man and the magical beast, slashed through the air, disappearing into the southern horizons. Seeing this, the city governor of Neil had a hint of excitement on his

face. “Looks like those bastards of the Rohault Empire are in for it now.”

The city governor of Neil immediately descended from the walls and led a small squad out of the city into the direction of the Golden Flame Legion’s camp.

The two armies of the two Empires stared at each other. Within the central battlefield, many soldiers were carting away the corpses of their own people. At a time like this, the two legions had quite conscientiously paused their battle.

The corpses were carried away, one after the other. At this time, the already faintly red earth was stained even more crimson, and the stench of blood had attracted quite a few locusts.

In the camp of the army of the Rohault Empire’s, their military flag was gently waving in the breeze. Multiple squads were out on patrol. Suddenly, an azurish-black cloud appeared in the air above the Rohault Empire’s camp.

“Not here?” Linley’s spiritual energy had encompassed the entire military camp, but he couldn’t find Reynolds’ corpse.

Senior Captain Hugh was currently in his tent, taking large gulps of strong liquor. He was in a wonderful mood. Hugh was certain that, after this battle, he would definitely be promoted.

“At the very least, I will be promoted to deputy legion commander,” Hugh mused to himself.

But right at this moment, a powerful force suddenly ripped apart his sturdy tent. Hugh was shocked. “What on earth? Have the enemies broken into our camp?” While thinking this, Hugh quickly rushed out, but when he did, he felt the wild, howling wind, so powerful that he couldn’t even stand straight.

Staring at his surroundings, Hugh’s face turned pale. He saw countless gusts of energy swirling about throughout the Rohault Empire’s camp, and all of the soldiers found it hard to stand stable.

After a while, the wild wind disappeared.

“All of the military officers of the Rohault Empire are to report to the central gathering location. Quickly.” A calm voice rang out from the sky. Everyone

craned their heads upwards. They saw that constantly flowing azurish-black mist, and within that mist, they could vaguely see the form of a terrifying creature.

“I am Legion Commander Chastre of the Rohault Empire’s Wright Legion. Might I ask why you have come here, esteemed expert?” Legion Commander Chastre asked respectfully.

From the power the man had just displayed, Chastre knew that this was a terrifyingly powerful expert with the ability to destroy this entire legion.

The azurish-black mist was drawn closer to Linley’s body, allowing the people below to clearly see what Linley looked like.

“Freak!”

“Demon!”

Many soldiers let out quiet cries of fear. Linley’s body landed heavily on the ground, causing it to shake and cracks to appear. Linley’s draconic tail swished about, gouging deep holes into the ground wherever it passed.

“Dare I ask, esteemed expert, are you Master Linley?” Chastre asked respectfully.

Linley glanced at Chastre. The man was quite experienced, and lived up to being a legion commander. After Linley had become famous, news about his Dragonformed appearance had been widely spread as well.

“It is I,” Linley said calmly.

The countless surrounding soldiers immediately felt a terrifying sense of pressure. They had all heard of how powerful Linley was, but Linley belonged to the O’Brien Empire’s side. Right now, they were currently engaged in battle against the O’Brien Empire.

“Master Linley, can it be that you are going to violate the laws of war? As a Saint-level expert, are you also going to participate in this battle?” Chastre said in a voice that was neither humble nor offensive. When two Empires engaged in battle, unless it was a do-or-die final battle, Saint-level experts generally were not permitted to participate.

Linley glanced at him coldly. "I dislike others threatening me."

Chastre immediately no longer dared to make a sound. If Linley were to go wild, he was truly capable of annihilating this entire army. He didn't have any recourse...

"Speak. A while ago, you sent some people out on ambush and chased a scouting party of the O'Brien Empire to the City of Neil. Who was the leader of that squad of three hundred?" Linley said coldly.

When he said this, virtually all the surrounding soldiers turned to stare at the nearby Hugh.

Hugh's body quivered.

No one needed to say anything. Linley turned to look at Hugh as well, and Hugh immediately said respectfully, "Master Linley, a while ago, I did indeed lead my troops to kill a large squad and utterly annihilated them in the end."

"Utterly annihilated?" Hearing these words, the muscles beneath Linley's eyes twitched once.

Linley stared at Hugh, his cold gaze causing Hugh to feel as though he had suddenly sunk into a frozen land of ice. "I heard that you not only killed all the people in that squad, you also brought back the corpse of the senior captain."

"It is true." A look of arrogance appeared on Hugh's face. As far as Hugh was concerned, this was something worth being proud of.

Linley's heart shook.

The man in front of him had admitted to it, but the military camp didn't have Reynolds' corpse within it. Could it be that Reynolds' corpse had already been destroyed? When he thought of this possibility, the angry flames in Linley's heart burned even hotter.

With a flicker, Linley appeared in front of Hugh.

"Ah." Hugh didn't have the chance to run away. Stretching out one arm, Linley's powerful right hand clutched around Hugh's throat, lifting Hugh into the air.

Linley's dark golden eyes stared death at Hugh. "Do you know? The name of

that senior captain was Reynolds. He was a friend for life of myself, Linley!” Linley ground his teeth.

The surrounding soldiers now all understood why Linley had come and done such a thing.

Hugh’s eyes were filled with shocked understanding as well. At the same time, he could sense that the force Linley was exerting around his throat was increasing. His face turning red, he forced out one word after another with difficulty. “No... that... that Reynolds... he... he didn’t die!”

Linley was stunned.

His hand loosened, and Hugh collapsed to the ground. Hugh immediately held his throat in his hands and began to cough.

Enslaved

“Fourth Bro didn’t die?” Stunned, Linley blurted these words out, but then he immediately came to himself. “Did you just say that Reynolds didn’t die?”

Right now, Linley’s heart was thumping madly. Shock, joy, worry, disbelief, excitement, fear... all sorts of emotions were intermixed in Linley’s chest. Right now, the only thing Linley could do was to stare expectantly at this military officer of the Rohault Empire in front of him.

Holding his throat, Hugh frantically said in fear, “It is true. He didn’t die. He really didn’t die.”

“Hugh, when you reported your military success, didn’t you say that the senior captain you captured had died already?” The nearby legion commander, Chastre, was frowning.

Lying to a Saint was extremely foolish. Chastre thought that Hugh was perhaps concocting a lie out of fear.

Linley stared at Hugh as well. He truly hoped that Hugh wasn’t lying.

“Speak, now.” Linley stared at Hugh. Every single person in the now-chaotic army camp was staring at Hugh. Hugh straightened his body, then hurriedly explained, “Master Linley, I truly am not lying. Back then, when I recovered that senior captain’s corpse, that is, Reynolds’ corpse, I carried the body myself. But afterwards, I discovered that this ‘corpse’ suddenly moved. Only then did I realize that he hadn’t died!”

Linley’s heart tightened.

An awkward look appeared on Hugh’s face. “Master Linley, this Reynolds was extremely handsome, and he was a noble, valuable magus. Based on the magic he used when my comrades and I were chasing him, he should most likely be a magus of the seventh rank. A handsome young magus of the seventh rank is

extremely valuable on the slave market.”

Hearing this, Linley instantly understood.

The surrounding military officers all understood as well. In times of war, there would often be large numbers of slaves sold to slave trading organizations. The army was often on good terms with these organizations, and a handsome young magus of the seventh rank would definitely be a valuable commodity.

A magus of the seventh rank was a high and mighty figure.

To cause a magus like this to become a slave was something that some noble ladies truly liked. They would be willing to pay enormous sums of money to purchase such a slave. The price one would get from selling such a magus of the seventh rank would probably be far greater than any reward money that Hugh would have received from the army.

“Are you saying... that you sold Reynolds to a slave trading organization?” Linley asked.

“Right,” Hugh said in terror. He now knew that Reynolds was Master Linley’s bosom friend.

“How badly was Reynolds injured?” Linley said with concern. From the reports he had heard, Reynolds had suffered life-threatening wounds. Linley was worried about him.

Hugh said with absolute certainty, “Master Linley, don’t worry. When I took Reynolds back, I immediately invited healers to come treat him. And then, after he was sold to the slave trading organization, those slave traders definitely wouldn’t let such a valuable commodity die.”

Valuable commodity?

In his heart, Linley was worried about his friend. Reynolds had fallen to the point of becoming a slave?

“Let’s go. You will come with me to find that slave trading organization. You should know where it is, right?” Linley grabbed Hugh by his clothes, and Hugh hurriedly said, “Yes, this humble one remembers it very clearly.”

The nearby Chastre snapped, “Hugh, from today onwards, you are to

accompany Master Linley. Whatever Master Linley wishes you to do, you must obey.” Chastre looked at Linley and said apologetically, “Master Linley, our deepest apologies. I hope you won’t be too upset with us.”

Chastre truly didn’t have any other options.

Generally speaking, in times of war, both sides wouldn’t dare to get the family and friends of Saints involved. After all, if a Saint was to go berserk, that would be quite terrifying.

In the annals of history, there had been more than a few cases of a Saint going berserk and killing tens of thousands of soldiers.

However, generally speaking, Saints were high and mighty people who stood above the fray. So long as you didn’t offend them, they wouldn’t stoop to causing troubles with ordinary people.

Linley glanced at Chastre, then snatched Hugh up. “Let’s go.” He suddenly rose into the air, and then flew alongside Bebe towards the south...

Watching Linley fly away, the entire military camp let out a collective sigh of relief. Facing such a powerful Saint, all of the warriors present truly didn’t have anything they could do.

“Commanders, go now and manage your subordinates. I’m worried that the Golden Flame Legion will seize this opportunity to launch a sneak attack.” Seeing how disorderly and dispirited the army camp was, Chastre couldn’t help but feel worried. After all, their army was already in a state of disorder, and the spirit of the army had already been suppressed by Linley.

Chastre’s prediction was correct. Not too long afterwards, the Golden Flame Legion once more began their ferocious assault.

Within a border city within the Rohault Empire. Hugh in hand, Linley descended upon a seemingly unremarkable estate, which had a number of exquisitely dressed guards within.

“Whoosh!” A sudden gust of wind came out of nowhere. Linley, now in human form again, appeared on the ground with Hugh in his clutches. Linley was no longer as grief-stricken and furious as he had been at the beginning, when he was preparing to avenge his brother’s death. He was much calmer,

now.

No matter what, at least his Fourth Bro was still alive.

“Old White! Old White!” Hugh immediately began to yell at the top of his lungs as soon as he landed.

“Who are you guys?” Old White didn’t come out, but quickly, over ten guards appeared in a circle around them, all of whom had their weapons at the ready, prepared to attack at any moment. Only then did a silver-haired old man in a gentleman’s suit appear from a side door. Seeing Hugh, the silver-haired old man laughed loudly. “Oh, so it is my dear Hugh. Why are you in such a rush, to the point of charging straight in?”

“Hugh, who is this?” The old gentleman named ‘White’ had very sharp eyes. He instantly could tell that this man dressed in a black robe was quite extraordinary. After returning to human form, Linley hadn’t changed his clothes, and so his pants were ripped and torn.

Linley frowned, glancing coldly at this Old White.

“Old White, this is Master Linley!” Hugh said hurriedly.

“Master Linley?” Old White was startled, and then a look of shock appeared on his face. “Could it be that this is the Dragonblood Warrior of the O’Brien Empire, Master Linley?”

Hugh hurriedly nodded. “I was flown over here by Master Linley.”

Old White didn’t dare to believe it. He was nothing more than a local supervisor for his slave trading organization. How could he be worth Master Linley, one of the towering figures of the Yulan continent, to come and visit him?

“Old White...” Linley looked at Old White.

“Master Linley.” Old White was extremely humble.

Linley went straight to the point. “Old White, roughly a month ago, Hugh brought a young magus of the seventh rank and sold him to you, I believe.”

Old White glanced at Hugh, then nodded towards Linley. “That is correct.”

“That magus of the seventh rank, his name is Reynolds! He is the bosom friend of me, Linley!” Linley’s voice was very calm, but his eyes stared coldly at Old White.

Old White’s eyes instantly turned as round as an ox’s. “Mas... Master Linley’s bosom friend?!” Old White’s eyes were filled with shock, terror, and disbelief.

Although these slave trading organizations were quite powerful and had some connections to the four major assassin’s guilds, no matter how powerful they were, they wouldn’t dare offend a Saint, much less a peak-stage Saint such as Linley!

“Hugh, you...” Old White stared furiously at Hugh.

It was Hugh who had sold that Reynolds to their organization. Their organization dared to sell almost anyone, even the disciples of major clans, but why had Hugh sold them the close friend of a Saint?

A bitter smile was on Hugh’s face.

He didn’t know either. If he knew, would he have dared to offend Reynolds? Now, Hugh’s life was in Linley’s hands.

“Old White,” Linley said.

Old White’s reaction speed was extremely fast. He hurriedly said to Linley, “Master Linley, don’t worry. Since this Mr. Reynolds is your friend, Master Linley, our organization definitely will not do anything to Mr. Reynolds. I will immediately send someone to inform our headquarters...”

“What’s the matter? Where is Reynolds?” Linley asked.

“This... this...” A hint of terror was on Old White’s face. After all, Reynolds had been sold off as a slave almost a month ago.

Linley could sense that something was wrong, and he immediately barked, “Speak!”

Old White had a feeling of terror in his heart. If a Saint such as Linley were to grow angry with him, it was totally possible that their entire organization would be wiped off the map. He hurriedly said, “Master Linley, when Mr. Reynolds was brought here, we first arranged for his wounds to be treated, and then

roughly ten days later, we sent him off with a large group of slaves in one shipment. From my understanding, Mr. Reynolds should probably already have arrived at our headquarters.”

“Headquarters?” Linley frowned.

Hugh was puzzled as well. “Old White, what’s this all about? Doesn’t your organization usually sell off slaves directly at the slave markets? Why would you send Mr. Reynolds to your headquarters?”

Old White hurriedly said, “We do sell off ordinary slaves at the slave markets, yes, but Mr. Reynolds was different. He is a magus of the seventh rank! He poses an extremely great risk. If we were to sell Mr. Reynolds to a customer, and then Mr. Reynolds was to use a magic spell and kill the customer, then our organization would have to pay a huge fine.”

Linley stared at Old White.

“Therefore, for powerful people such as Mr. Reynolds and other dangerous, top-quality slaves, they all are sent off to the headquarters, where they will be trained for three months. They will be trained and taught to never dare to disobey a command and obediently obey their masters. Only then would we deliver them to customers,” Old White explained.

Linley’s face changed.

Train them so they wouldn’t dare to disobey? Obediently obey their masters’ orders? The person being trained was an expert like Reynolds... Linley could totally imagine how sinister and terrifying this ‘training’ was.

“Where is your headquarters? Take me there,” Linley’s face changed and he immediately shouted.

Old White hesitated for a moment, but seeing the terrifying look in Linley’s eyes, he immediately nodded. “Yes, Master Linley, I will immediately guide you to our headquarters.”

“Our headquarters is deep within the Rohault Empire and is far from the borders. Given the winding roads, it is a journey of three thousand kilometers from here,” Old White said.

“My Boss can just fly you over there,” the nearby Bebe said unhappily. Bebe was worried for Reynolds as well. After all, when they were at the Ernst Institute, Bebe would often have fun alongside and play around alongside Reynolds.

Old White hurriedly nodded. He didn’t dare to say a word.

“Master Linley, there’s no need for me to go with you, right?” The nearby Hugh was filled with terror.

Linley turned to stare at Hugh. Currently, Reynolds was probably being tormented by those people in the slave trading organization’s headquarters. Thinking of this, Linley couldn’t help but feel a hint of fury.

“Slash!” A blurred claw swiped out. Hugh clutched his throat with terror, but fresh blood still flowed out of his throat. A few moments later, Hugh toppled to the floor.

Floating in mid-air, Bebe cast a dissatisfied glance at Hugh. “You bastard, you thought you would be able to save your worthless skin? Are you damn stupid or what? When you were killing the soldiers of Reynolds’ corps, you thought it was quite enjoyable, right? Well, today, when I, Bebe, killed you, I felt it was very enjoyable as well.”

Seeing this scene play out, Old White’s body was trembling slightly.

“Old fellow, don’t be afraid. As long as you obediently follow my Boss’s orders, I, Bebe, definitely won’t mistreat you.” Bebe smiled widely, revealing his sharp fangs.

Old White had heard of how, during Linley’s duel with Haydson, Linley’s two Saint-level magical beasts had appeared, one of which seemed to be a mouse-type magical beast and which had easily trampled Haydson. Staring at the hovering Bebe, Old White was beginning to suspect that this Bebe was most likely that very terrifying magical beast.

Terrified, Old White could only force himself to smile at Bebe.

Linley snatched Old White then soared into the air, flying towards the southeast. “Old White, lead the way for me!” The terrified Old White cleared his throat a few times, stared at the ground below, then began to direct Linley

towards their headquarters.

Cruelty

Let us return to year 10009 of the Yulan calendar, September 21st. A few days had passed after Wharton and Nina's grand wedding. At this time, Linley was under the belief that Reynolds had died.

However...

"This is the third day on this ship. That bastard just tortured another slave to death, then tossed him into the river." Through the steel-barred windows, Reynolds could see the outside world. He had watched a seemingly powerful, yet bloodstained body be tossed into the river. A human being, just like that, sank into the river with a 'plop'.

In the army, Reynolds had already seen how worthless a human life was.

However, on this slave journey, Reynolds had been truly shocked by how terrifying these slavers were. Fortunately, he, Reynolds, was an extremely valuable commodity, and so those slavers didn't dare to kill him.

"Whap!" A whip struck Reynolds heavily on his body, and then against Reynolds' face. Instantly, a bloody welt could be seen forming on his face, and his ragged clothes were covered with rips as well.

"Motherfucker, what are you looking at?" a large whip-wielding thug shouted angrily at Reynolds.

Reynolds could only huddle into a corner of the ship, not daring to make a sound. He had learned to be obedient. If he wanted to try and be brave and stare back at him... he probably would be tortured this entire night.

This slaving vessel was extremely large. The bottommost deck held those cheapest of slaves. Those slavers would sometimes go down to that deck, and if they saw someone they disliked, they would strike them heavily.

Reynolds, as an extremely valuable slave, was imprisoned within a special

room in the second level. The windows to this room were barred with steel, and there were two thugs on watch at all times.

Quite a few thugs were stationed in the other rooms on the second floor as well.

The third and uppermost floor was used for transporting the leaders of this slaving vessel. One was an expert of the eighth rank, while two were experts of the seventh rank. If it wasn't for Reynolds, this slaving vessel wouldn't have had an expert of the eighth rank sent along with it.

On the deck of this ship, a tall, strong, bald man walked down from the third floor.

"Lord Peel," The surrounding thugs said respectfully.

Seeing the bloodstains on the deck of the ship, the bald man frowned. "Wipe those bloodstains away. Also, slaves are worth fucking money. All of you be careful when you hit them. Don't kill them. If you kill a slave, that means the organization will lose some money."

Those thugs didn't dare to make a sound.

The bald man snorted, then walked to the chain links at the deck's edge. The cool night wind blew against him as he enjoyed the beautiful night scenery of the Bonai River.

"Right. What's going on with that magus?" The bald man snorted.

A nearby thug immediately said obsequiously, "Lord Peel, that little pretty-boy magus started off all high and mighty, but after the boys spent a bit of time trainin' him these past few days, he's learned his lesson."

"Excellent," The bald man said calmly. "All of you, be careful and keep a close eye on that magus. The only valuable commodity we are escorting this time is that magus of the seventh rank. And, by the looks of it, this magus is a noble. When we sell him, the price will be extraordinarily high."

Those thugs all nodded.

A young magus of the seventh rank was definitely one of the best auction items that would appear in the slave markets. People would go even crazier for

him than they would for a beautiful virgin.

“What’s that noise?” The bald man suddenly frowned, then turned his head and stared at the cabin. “That sick bastard keeps on coughing. Drag him out. Motherfucker, he pisses me off.’ A hint of bloodlust was in the eyes of the bald man.

Soon, a skinny young man was dragged out. By the looks of him, he was eighteen or nineteen years old. His body was covered with a foul odor as well as bloodstains. The eyes of this youngster were rather vacant. This long period of imprisonment had caused him to go crazy. He was nothing more than a young man who had left his hometown in search of his dreams, but who would’ve thought that he would suddenly have been seized and sold to a slaving organization? Just like that, he had entered a nightmare.

“Hrm?” The bald man stretched his hand out, and a nearby thug very conscientiously filled it with a whip.

Holding the whip, the bald man cracked it in the air, creating a clear, crisp sound. Suddenly, a hint of fear appeared in the blank eyes of the youngster.

“If you aren’t dead, why do you keep coughing? You ruined the wonderful mood I was in.” The bald man suddenly landed a vicious whipping blow onto the skinny youth.

This whip blow was far stronger than the blows of those common thugs.

The skinny youngster’s body suddenly trembled violently, and a terrifyingly deep whip-scar was left from his face to his waist. Blood immediately began to flow out. As for his clothes, they were destroyed long ago.

“Whap!” “Whap!” “Whap!” “Whap!” ...

The bald man viciously whipped him, fully venting his temper on this poor young man’s body. The skinny youngster, quite experienced by now, immediately tried to protect his head and curled into a ball. What he thought was that as long as he could endure, he might still be able to preserve his life.

Sadly. Although the bald man didn’t dare to kill Reynolds, the bald man dared to kill him.

“Lord Peel, he’s dead,” A nearby thug whispered.

The bald man casually tossed his bloodstained whip to a nearby thug, then turned back to stare at the raging river waters, stretching lazily. “Damn, that feels good. You guys, toss that piece of trash overboard. Also, make sure you scrub the deck clean.”

“Yes, Lord Peel.” The surrounding thugs quickly began to work as instructed.

“Plop!” With a plopping sound, yet another body was tossed into the river.

Each slaving ship carried several hundred slaves within it, and on each trip, over ten would be tortured to death. The ones that the thugs would beat to death were the ones who were physically the weakest. The physically stronger ones would be able to hold on for longer. Thus, the slaving organization didn’t lose too much.

“Yet another one.” Reynolds sighed in his heart. He didn’t expect that after managing to escape Neil City alive, he would have fallen to such a state.

Reynolds didn’t know what his future would be like.

“Be a slave?” Thinking about the debased, dark life of a slave, Reynolds shuddered.

“Pretty-boy, what are you mumbling? Do you want to cast a spell?” With an angry roar and a “WHAP!” sound, another whip blow came, striking him directly on his face.

Pain. Humiliation!

These thugs clearly knew that Reynolds was a magus of the seventh rank. All of those petty, despicable thugs wanted to whip Reynolds whenever they could, so as to satisfy their petty pride.

“Motherfucker, fuck off!” Reynolds was truly angry now.

The more he endured, the more overbearing these men became.

“Oh ho!” The thug with the whip raised an eyebrow, his lips curving into a sneer as he looked at Reynolds. “You still have the gall to be arrogant?” As he spoke, he struck out with another whip.

A ferocious light flashed in Reynolds eyes, and his lips quickly muttered the words to a magic spell.

“BAM!” A series of fireballs the size of a person’s head erupted out from Reynolds, striking out wildly towards those two thugs. In the blink of an eye, they had been encircled by over ten balls of fire.

“Ah!!!” Those two thugs screamed miserably, their entire bodies covered with flame. What’s more, these flames burned much hotter than ordinary, fire-stoked flames. The two thugs quickly had their skin turned into char. Soon, they stopped breathing.

Immediately after casting the spell, Reynolds charged outside.

But just then...

“Bam!” A sudden hole appeared in the ceiling of the room, and a one-eyed man wearing a red robe descended into the middle of the room. With a flash, he reached Reynolds, and then kicked Reynolds with his leg.

“Bam!” Reynolds was knocked into a corner of the cabin, hard. Blood spewed from his mouth.

The one-eyed, red-robed man glanced back at the two charred corpses, then stared coldly at Reynolds. “You are asking for death!” Reynolds stared back at the red-haired and red-robed one-eyed man.

“No wonder the organization insists on three months of special training. All of you are miserable wretches,” the one-eyed man cursed. Simply capturing an expert such as a magus of the seventh rank was not enough. To make them feel, in the deepest parts of their hearts, unable to resist any orders, was extremely difficult. If they were angered, they would go all out.

Moments later...

Multiple thugs grabbed Reynolds by his limbs, making sure he couldn’t move. The red-haired one-eyed man and two bald men stared coldly at Reynolds.

“Pretty-boy, I’ve reminded you that you need to be a good boy on my boat. But you, you make me very angry,” The red-haired one-eyed man said in a cold voice. “Peel, help him improve his memory.”

Reynolds' face immediately turned pale.

He remembered the threat that the one-eyed man had previously made to him. The terror-stricken Reynolds stared with bulging eyes, but the bald man named Peel only laughed as he walked over. "Hold one of his hands down for me." Immediately, the thugs grabbed Reynolds' hands and pressed them against the deck.

From the deck, Peel retrieved a pair of steel pincers that were used for cutting through iron chains. He pressed the steel pincers around two of Reynolds' fingers. Sensing the cold feeling from his fingers, Reynolds' heart trembled.

"Hrmph. Squeeze." The one-eyed man sneered coldly.

The steel pincers clamped down, and as easily as cutting through cloth, Reynolds' two fingers were cut off. Fresh blood flowed out as piercing pain wracked Reynolds' body.

The pain of losing two fingers was far worse than even when he had received a blade chop on his body.

Hearing Reynolds agonized moans, the nearby thugs began to grow excited. The one-eyed man sneered coldly, "Pretty-boy, remember this. Today, all I did was teach you a little lesson. If you forget this lesson again, I guarantee... you will never forget the next lesson again." After speaking, the one-eyed man turned and walked away.

Dark night.

Reynolds was curled into the icy cold corner of the room, his body still trembling slightly. His severed finger-stubs had already clotted. The two nearby thugs occasionally looked at him, their eyes filled with madness.

Reynolds had killed two of their friends. These thugs naturally were filled with hatred towards him.

"Motherfucker. Pretty-boy."

A whip suddenly flashed out, aimed at Reynolds' wounded hand. Reynolds tried his best to hide his injured hand behind his back, but part of that whip still clipped his hand. An extreme wave of pain and agony came from his hand... the

wound burst open yet again. In particular, the pain of the whip striking his finger bones was especially agonizing. It was as though his fingers had been chopped off yet again.

“Enough. Stop hitting him,” The nearby thug said.

Actually, the two thugs were also afraid that Reynolds would go crazy once more and cast magic at them. However, the thug which had just hit Reynolds was on extremely good terms with one of the two thugs that had been killed. Naturally, he wanted revenge.

“I can’t do this. I have to escape.” Curled into a ball in the icy corner, Reynolds secretly thought to himself, “If this sort of life continues, I really will go insane.”

Reynolds knew that even if he was able to persevere and hold on to his sanity, the only thing that would welcome him was the life of a slave.

“Tomorrow. Tomorrow, when the ship reaches the shore, I’ll make my move.” Reynolds had no time for any misgivings. Actually, every day this ship would stop at the shore. One reason was to replenish their food supplies; the other was because the one-eyed man didn’t like to eat dry food. He preferred eating fresh delicacies. Thus, they had to go ashore to do so.

However, the one-eyed man was very careful. Whenever he went ashore to eat, the other two experts of the seventh rank would watch Reynolds.

Time passed very slowly. Lying on the floor late at night, Reynolds felt even colder. What’s more, throbbing pain continued to come in waves from his severed fingers. He gritted his teeth and endured.

Slowly, the sky began to turn bright.

Those two thugs whipped Reynolds a few more times, but Reynolds only huddled in the corner, quietly accepting the blows. He knew that he couldn’t resist. The first time he resisted, he had lost two fingers. The next time he resisted... then perhaps, like the one-eyed man had threatened, the next ‘lesson’ would be one he would never forget!

Reynolds quietly waited for the boat to near the shore.

After a long, long time...

“We’ve reached the shore.” Ringing sounds could be heard from the deck above. Soon afterwards, the sound of footsteps could be heard. Clearly, the two experts had walked down.

“Peel, you two stand watch. I’ll go rest for a bit, and then I’ll come and change places with you two,” the one-eyed man’s voice could be heard.

“Milord, don’t worry,” Peel’s voice rang out as well.

Hearing the footsteps head away from the ship, Reynolds let out a silent sigh of relief, and then he shut his eyes, once more mentally going through his escape plan.

The plan was very dangerous, but he had to give it a try.

Glancing at the two nearby thugs, Reynolds curled into a corner and lowered his head, and his lips began to slightly move...

The Order

The red-haired one-eyed thug led a group of thugs off the slave ship, while Peel and the other bald man stood on the deck, casually chatting while occasionally glancing towards Reynolds.

“Peel, tomorrow, we’ll finally reach the provincial capital. At that time, we’ll send off those common slaves and have ourselves a good time. Spending every day on a boat is a damnable way to live,” the bald man cursed in a whisper.

Peel began to laugh as well.

But just at this time, Peel suddenly heard a terrifying roar from a magical beast...

“Hooooowl!” All of a sudden, a terrifying, enormous flame serpent, as thick as a water barrel, came exploding out of the cabin, blasting a hole into the side of the ship.

The enormous fire serpent was as thick as a water barrel and over a hundred meters long. Howling, it circled around the slave ship, which instantly was set aflame. At the same time, the fire serpent charged directly towards the interior of the ship, blasting a hole through the entire vessel. Aside from around ten or so slaves in the bottom hold who were burnt to the death, the hundreds of other slaves wildly charged out from the hole in the ship which the fire serpent had made.

“Motherfucker. That pretty-boy!” Peel said, his face changing.

“Quick! Catch him!”

The two bald men immediately ran towards Reynolds room. At this time, they didn’t care about the common slaves at all, but that enormous fire serpent actually charged straight towards the two of them.

“Motherfucker, a Blazing Fire Serpent. Be careful!” Peel and the other man

were both nervous now.

Fire-style, spell of the seventh rank – Blazing Fire Serpent!

This was the most powerful spell which Reynolds could cast; the Blazing Fire Serpent. If this spell were to advance in level, it would transform into the eighth-ranked spell, 'Dance of the Fire Serpents'. The 'Dance of the Fire Serpents' would create and attack with seven enormous fire serpents, and the temperature of the serpents would be even hotter. As for the Blazing Fire Serpent, it was still extremely powerful.

Most warriors of the seventh rank wouldn't dare to fight it head on.

The bald man, Peel, dodged as agilely as a fish, avoiding the attack of the Blazing Fire Serpent, at the same time moving towards where Reynolds previously had been staying. In the room, Peel saw nothing but ash. Those two thugs' bodies had been charred to dust, and there were two large circular holes in the walls.

Clearly, Reynolds had fled via these two holes.

"Ah! Ah!!!" A miserable scream could be heard nearby. The other bald man hadn't been able to completely dodge the Blazing Fire Serpent. As soon as it had brushed by the man, the Blazing Fire Serpent immediately wrapped itself around him. The bald man's battle-qi armor quickly was depleted, and the sickly-sweet smell of burnt flesh appeared.

Seeing this, the look on Peel's face changed.

"Dale!!!!" Peel went insane. "You motherfucking bastard!"

By now, many of the slaves who had escaped from the bottom of the boat had begun frantically fleeing in each direction. After having been captured as slaves, they had felt utterly hopeless, but now, all of them were filled with hope once more, and they frantically fled.

Peel charged out from within those two holes as well, and with a mighty leap, arrived directly onto the shore.

"That damnable pretty-boy." Peel stared at the slave ship in the Bonai River. The utterly demolished ship was slowly sinking, and it continued to burn with

sheets of flame. Filled with smoke and fire and water, this ship was clearly finished.

“Peel, Dale!” A furious roar from afar.

The red-haired one-eyed man ran over at high speed, his single eye filled with unspeakable rage. Staring at Peel, he howled angrily, “Peel, where is he? Where is that magus?”

“Milord, that magus cast the Blazing Fire Serpent spell. No idea where he fled to. Dale died.” Peel was furious as well.

The one-eyed man panted with fury.

The Blazing Fire Serpent was capable of dealing with warriors of the seventh rank, but if it had encountered the one-eyed man, given his power as a warrior of the eighth rank, he definitely would’ve been able to destroy the Blazing Fire Serpent and seize Reynolds.

This was the reason why his slaving organization had sent him, a warrior of the eighth rank, on this mission.

But the one-eyed man hadn’t expected that right after he had taught that magus a lesson, he would dare to go all out like this.

“Quick, seize him. Bring that magus back,” the one-eyed man immediately shouted towards the surrounding thugs. “The ten of you, split up and search upstream and downstream. The dozens of you over here, start searching the nearby area. You must bring that magus back to me. Quickly!”

“Yes, milord!”

The furious thugs scattered every which way. Most of their forces were concentrated in the surrounding area, while only five thugs were sent searching upstream and downstream.

Reynolds was dressed like the other slaves, in absolutely raggedy clothes, and his body was covered with scars. Because the other slaves had fled as well, on many occasions, those thugs would see some other slaves, think they were Reynolds, and immediately rush over to seize them. Unfortunately, they were wasting their time.

An hour later.

The one-eyed man stood at the harbor, his heart filled with rage as he stared angrily around him.

“Milord, we’ve discovered over ten slaves downstream, but we didn’t find that magus,” a thug ran over to report. The speed at which they had travelled on land was definitely faster than the speed of the flowing river.

“Milord, we didn’t find that magus upstream either.”

“Milord, we didn’t find that magus in the surrounding areas. All we found were those common slaves.”

Hearing one report after another from his subordinates, the one-eyed man stared at the surrounding area. He was so angry he could die. This harbor was the harbor for a small town. Their organization didn’t have any forces here.

This was why the one-eyed man had no choice but to send those few dozen thugs to search for Reynolds.

Several dozen people had spent an hour without finding Reynolds. Then... there was no way he could be found. Because one hour was more than enough time for a person to travel a great distance. And how could several dozen people search an area of several dozen square kilometers?

“Bastard!” the one-eyed man snarled and cursed. “Let’s go. We have to report this immediately to the organization. That pretty-boy better hope that I don’t catch him. Otherwise... I will make sure his fate is worse than death.”

The sky was dark now. The one-eyed man and the others had already left helplessly. Several thousand meters away, next to the riverbank, a human form emerged from the water.

“Patooyey.” Reynolds spat out the breathing reed from his mouth.

Glancing at his surroundings, Reynolds finally let out a long sigh. Reynolds hadn’t dared to be the slightest bit incautious during this escape attempt. After casting his spell, he had immediately dove into the water, then plucked a hollow reed and used it to breathe. Each time he dove down, he would travel more than a thousand meters before daring to raise his head.

“I’m very far away now. Those people can’t possibly find me now.” Reynolds went onto the shore.

Reynolds body suddenly began to emit a white steam. A few moments later, Reynolds tattered clothes were totally dry again. Glancing at the surrounding area, Reynolds centered himself through using the flow of the river.

“That slaving organization has people in all the major cities. It’s better if I stick to the smaller cities. I can’t go back through the border between the two Empires. The slaving organizations have quite a few people in the border cities.” Although Reynolds believed that they wouldn’t spend too much effort searching for him, it was better for him to be careful. Reynolds had decided to first enter the Anarchic Lands through the Rohault Empire, and then return to the O’Brien Empire through the Anarchic Lands.



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The world was very dark now. The only light that could be seen was sporadic campfires. A dark shadow was flying through the skies, slashing through the air at high speed.

“Whoooooosh!” Their high-speed flight caused Old White to unconsciously narrow his eyes. From the skies, he could clearly make out the various roads, and so it was easy for him to make out the various landmarks.

“Master Linley, it is right below us.” Old White pointed at a distant countryside town.

“Oh? That little town is your organization’s headquarters?” Linley glanced at Old White. The town seemed no different from any other ordinary little town. In the darkness, a few lamp lights could be seen.

Old White hurriedly nodded. “It is. This is just some of our organization’s camouflaging abilities.”

“Whoosh!”

Linley immediately charged down, leaving a black shadowy trail of afterimages behind him. He landed in the middle of the headquarters of the

slaving organization... this countryside town.

Linley was wearing a deep blue robe. Hovering in the air, he loosened his hand, allowing Old White to fall to the ground. "Have the leader of your organization come out."

Old White didn't dare to disobey.

At this moment, a number of people ran over at high speed, surrounding them. But when they saw Linley was standing in mid-air, they were all stunned. Generally speaking, only Saints were capable of flight. Naturally, powerful wind-style magi could fly as well. In truth, right now, Linley was only capable of flight without transforming because he had already cast the Windshadow spell.

"Old White, why have you come?" a middle-aged madame glanced at Linley, then whispered to Old White.

Old White shouted loudly, "Quick, quick, have the leader come! This is Master Linley, the mighty Dragonblood Warrior, Master Linley!"

Master Linley?

These words were quite effective. A slaving organization, in terms of power, was far inferior to even the three major trading unions or the four great assassin's guilds. Naturally, it didn't dare to offend a Saint. Many people immediately ran to get their leaders, and all of the high-ranking people quickly began to assemble.

Linley stood there in mid-air, calmly waiting. Bebe stood atop of Linley's shoulders.

"Boss, this little town looked quite ordinary, but the insides of these buildings are quite unique! Many of them have underground basements," Bebe spoke to Linley mentally.

Linley nodded slightly.

In just a short while, a large group of people began to head in this direction from afar, with their leader being a tall, thin man who was dressed in a gaudy long robe. This man was half-running, half-walking, his forehead covered with sweat.

“Master Linley, my name is Dennis, and I am the leader of this organization. Is there something we can do for you, Master Linley? If there is, please inform us, Master,” the tall, thin man said humbly, filled with terror.

Although he had never met Linley before, a Saint who could hover in mid-air, no matter who he really was, wasn't someone he dared to offend.

Linley glanced at him, then said, “Dennis! A month ago, you bought a magus from Old White over at the border city. He should have arrived here by now.”

Dennis was startled.

A somewhat fatter, older man next to Dennis hurriedly said, “Master Linley, I was responsible for this assignment. Halfway here, at the Bonai River, that magus burned our slaving vessel and fled.”

“Fled?” Linley was surprised but also relieved.

Fourth Bro was quite impressive, to be able to escape from the clutches of the slaving organization.

Only now did Dennis come to his senses, and he nodded. “I'm aware of this event as well. After the magus fled, we sent our forces to some cities to try and recapture him, but we've yet to find him. This was over ten days ago now.”

“Leader, that magus is Master Linley's bosom friend!” Old White hurriedly said.

Dennis' face immediately turned ugly to behold, while at the same time he was filled with fear.

Linley glanced at them. “From today onwards, you are forbidden from attempting to capture my friend.”

Dennis hurriedly said, “Of course. If we find him, we will definitely treat him as an honored guest.”

Linley nodded calmly. Without wasting any more words, Linley and Bebe flew off and left.

Given the current situation, the slaving organization didn't really matter much now. Fourth Bro had escaped over ten days ago. By now, he should've fled quite far.

In mid-air.

“Bebe, you go back first. Immediately have Zassler and the others head out towards the Anarchic Lands. I plan to spend a bit of time scanning the area around the Bonai River and between the borders of the Rohault Empire and the O’Brien Empire. I want to see if I can find Fourth Bro. After I finish my search, I will join up with you.” Linley had already come to this decision.

Searching using spiritual energy was actually quite a painful experience for most Saint-level warriors.

Most Saint-level warriors would only be able to occasionally search using their spiritual energy, because in truth, their spiritual energy wasn’t extremely strong. It was magi who had powerful spiritual energy. In terms of spiritual energy, that Haydson who had been training for centuries was at most on par with Linley.

It would only take a short hour to cover that distance, but if one were to search carefully, one would definitely have to spend at least several days.

“Got it.” Bebe obediently nodded his little head, then flew at high speed towards the O’Brien Empire.

Establishing a Base in the Anarchic Lands

Transforming into his Dragonblood Warrior form, Linley began to trace from the Bonai River all the way to the border City of Neil, carefully scanning the surrounding areas. Every so often, he would have to rest to recover his spiritual energy.

He spent six full days and nights searching, and viewed all the nearby cities as well.

However...

He didn't find Reynolds.

"Master Linley, don't worry. As soon as our Dawson Conglomerate discovers young master Reynolds, we will definitely make sure he safely makes it back home," a supervisor for the Dawson Conglomerate within one of the prefectural cities at the border of the Rohault Empire said respectfully to Linley.

Linley nodded slightly.

Right now, the only choice he had was to entrust this task to the Dawson Conglomerate. In his heart, Linley felt a bit puzzled. "Where did Fourth Bro run off to? Why didn't he go to the Dawson Conglomerate's branch headquarters? The Dawson Conglomerate has branches in each of the various prefectural cities."

Actually, Linley didn't understand.

Reynolds had been truly terrified by his time spent aboard that slaving vessel. Reynolds had decided that so long as he was within the borders of the Rohault Empire, no matter what, he would not enter any large cities. Although large cities had branch headquarters of the Dawson Conglomerate, it also had slaving organizations. If he were to be caught by slaving organizations, once he was discovered by them, he would be in dire straits.

“Any risk of being caught is too much risk. I’d rather take some side routes.” Reynolds was very firm in his decision.

Given his power, heading towards the Anarchic Lands via some cross-country travelling wasn’t too hard. Once he reached the Anarchic Lands, he would then make contact with the Dawson Conglomerate. By then, he would be able to return safely.



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By nightfall, in an ordinary courtyard within a prefectural city of the O’Brien Empire’s Southeast Administrative Province. Zassler, the Barker brothers, Rebecca, Leena, and Jenne were all here.

The sound of knocking could be heard. Carrying that massive greataxe on his back, Gates strode forward and threw the door open. In front of the door were three attendants, all pushing food carts.

“What took you so long?” Gates swept the three men with his ox-like stare, causing their hearts to tremble. In front of the massive Gates, the three of them were like small children.

Suddenly, a bestial roar could be heard from the courtyard. The three attendants turned towards the sound...

The Blackcloud Panther, Haeru, lazily padded his way over. The natural, baleful aura of a top-class magical beast such as the Blackcloud Panther was more than enough to set hearts trembling. Haeru glanced at the three with his dark, cold eyes, and then disdainfully turned his head and lay down on the ground.

The three attendants exchanged glances, not daring to make any sound.

They immediately put all the plates of food onto the table, then quickly left. When they walked out of the courtyard, they wiped the cold sweat from their foreheads.

“Who the hell are these guys? Those five men were enormous!”

“And those axes were so huge. They have to weigh at least a thousand pounds each.”

“And that old man. He looked like a skeleton. All he did was glance at me, and I felt fear. But those three ladies were certainly pretty. If I could marry such a beautiful girl, I’d be willing to have my lifespan shortened by a few dozen years.”

In the eyes of these hotel attendants, the guests in this courtyard were definitely extremely, terrifyingly powerful entities. While Zassler and the others ate, Bebe and Haeru remained within the courtyard. This was because they could sense... that Linley was heading back at high speed.

A short while later, Linley, dressed in a deep blue robe, landed from the skies.

“Lord Linley.” Barker and his brothers ran over to welcome him excitedly. Jenne, Rebecca, and Leena all came over to welcome him as well.

“Linley, how did it go? Did you find Reynolds?” Zassler asked.

Linley shook his head. Right now, Linley was in a fairly good mood. Since the slave trading organization hadn’t found Reynolds, given Reynolds’ power as a magus of the seventh rank, as long as he didn’t anger someone powerful, he shouldn’t be in any danger.

“Fourth Bro has been a soldier for many years now, and the slave trading organization is no longer after him either... given the circumstances, he should have a 100% chance of escaping and returning.” Linley was very confident in his friend.

“If Reynolds isn’t able to make it back safely under such favorable conditions, he wouldn’t be worthy of being your bro, Lord. The Rohault Empire is usually very stable and very safe,” Gates said loudly. “In the past, when we brothers were just warriors of the seventh rank, we lived a wonderful life in the Eighteen Northern Duchies.”

Linley laughed.

He entered the room with the others and began to eat dinner.

“Linley.” Zassler put down his utensils, then asked, “We are about to head off

to the Anarchic Lands. What are your plans?”

Linley knew that Zassler was the most experienced member of his team. With an eight-hundred-year-old man by his side, many things would be much easier to accomplish.

“Zassler, what do you feel we should do?” Linley asked.

Barker said, “Lord Linley, actually, I imagine that the Anarchic Lands must be very similar to our Eighteen Northern Duchies. You do all your talking with your fists. Given our tremendous power, we definitely would be able to quickly establish a mighty force.”

Zassler nodded. “What Barker just described is one type of method, yes. Linley... I believe we have two options right now. The first is what Barker just said. Using our reputation as Saints, we can quickly dominate a very wide swathe of territory. In the Anarchic Lands, the rally call of a Saint is very effective.”

Linley nodded slightly.

The Anarchic Lands were often in a state of chaos and warfare. The citizens caught in these chaotic battles desperately hoped for their leader to be a powerful figure. If he publicly announced himself as a Saint, there would definitely be many people willing to follow Linley.

After all, Saints would be able to provide their followers with a good deal of safety and security.

“The second method is to, at least at first, not announce your status, Linley. We’ll start in the smaller regions. First, we’ll find an ordinary little city where the lives of the commoners are unbearably bad. Even if I were to act by myself, I could easily take over such a small city. And then, we will slowly expand to larger cities, then erect our own duchy. And then, we continue, one step at a time. In the past... I was a Grand Duke in the Anarchic Lands, myself.” Zassler laughed.

The second method was the method which many ambitious people used.

After all, the first method could only be used by powerful experts with overwhelming force.

“Milord, what method do you wish to use?” Zassler looked at Linley. “The benefit to the first method is that it is fast. Within a year, we can easily take over countless duchies in the Anarchic Lands. The second method is slower, but it allows us to have a more stable foundation.”

Jenne, the other two girls, Barker, and his brothers all stared at Linley, waiting for his decision.

“Zassler, we’ll carry out the second method.” Linley made his decision after pondering for a while.

“Our target is the Radiant Church, and the Radiant Church is very skilled at seducing the masses. We need to move slowly, one step at a time, and let the commoners be fully willing to follow our orders. We need to give them a strong sense of belonging. Otherwise... even if we take over a large amount of territory, when we fight against the Radiant Church, we will have many traitors and riots,” Linley said.

Zassler laughed and nodded.

“Very well then. We’ll secretly expand. We won’t attract any attention. Otherwise, if we start raising Linley’s banner from the start, we will attract a great deal of hostility from many areas.”

Zassler was quiet for a moment, then continued. “Linley, the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows both have tremendous influence in the Anarchic Lands. If you wish to expand there, I think... the first step would be to begin closer to the Forest of Darkness. In other words, the northernmost area of the Anarchic Lands.”

Linley raised an eyebrow. “The northern part of the Anarchic Lands?”

“Right. The area near the Forest of Darkness. Because it often suffers attacks from the magical beasts of the Forest of Darkness, the people of that area are extremely sturdy and very violent. Few of the citizens of that area have much faith in the Radiant Church. They worship the strong. In addition, given our power, we don’t need to fear those low-rank and medium-rank magical beasts at all.” Zassler smiled.

Hearing Zassler’s words, Linley agreed in his mind.

“From the east edge to the west edge of the northern part of the Anarchic Lands is roughly a thousand miles. There are many small cities with only a few tens of thousands of citizens in them. There will be plenty of options for us,” Zassler said confidently.

As Zassler saw it, occupying and taking over a city in the Anarchic Lands which had a population of just a few tens of thousands was as easy as breathing. Either Zassler or the Barker brothers could easily erect a Dukedom in the Anarchic Lands, all by themselves, much less occupy a small city.

Linley’s team was truly powerful.

He had a whole group of Saints, and Linley, Bebe, and Haeru were peak-stage Saints. Most likely, even the powerful hidden force the Radiant Church had within the Anarchic Lands couldn’t match Linley for power.

For such a team, building a base in the Anarchic Lands was incomparably easy.

The Anarchic Lands was more than half the size of the O’Brien Empire, and was definitely on par with the size of the current Radiant Church, Rohault Empire, and Rhine Empire.

Long ago, when a census had been run on the Anarchic Lands, it was found that the 48 duchies had a total population of over three hundred million. Such an enormous population wasn’t much lower than the population of the Rhine Empire and the Rohault Empire. The countless years of chaotic battles hadn’t lowered the population all that much. Instead, all it had done was make the people of that area even more vicious and violent.

This sort of chaotic region was a veritable playground for powerful experts!

After passing the border, Linley and his team entered the Anarchic Lands. Upon entering their very first city in the Anarchic Lands, Linley could sense what a state of frenzy and chaos the people here were in.

“Long years of warfare have caused food to become extremely expensive in the Anarchic Lands. Although some duchies have worked hard to try to bring an end to warfare during the harvest seasons, sometimes, they are still forced to do battle...” Zassler sighed.

The Anarchic Lands were totally different from the Holy Union and the

O'Brien Empire.

In the cities of the Holy Union and the O'Brien Empire, one could sense a peaceful, amiable aura. Noble madams and young noble ladies there all wore lavish clothes and casually strolled about the streets.

But in the Anarchic Lands, heavily armored warriors could be seen everywhere, and the cities were filled with a ferocious aura, giving the sense that a single wrong word could result in murder. This was the norm, here.

Linley's team continued to travel towards the north. As they travelled, they carefully observed the local areas, gaining a better understanding of the Anarchic Lands.

"A priest?" Linley saw from afar someone dressed as a priest. "Damn the Radiant Church. Chapels can be seen everywhere in the Anarchic Lands, and all of them openly preach and proselytize for the Radiant Church..."

As they continued to travel, Linley's heart grew heavy.

The Radiant Church's influence here was indeed tremendous.

Linley's team moved quite quickly. After journeying for roughly ten days, they arrived at the northern part of the Anarchic Lands. Linley and his people entered a small city known as 'Blackdirt City'.

It was noon.

Within a private room in an ordinary hotel, Zassler said to Linley, "Based on my investigations from earlier this morning, the city governor of this place, Blackdirt City, is a classic example of all brawns, no brains. All he wants to do is be the ruler of a small city and enjoy the life of a local tyrant. He is extremely tyrannical and oppressive to the common folk... I think that this should be quite suitable for us to take over as our first little city."

"But this is only the first city we've considered!" Linley was rather surprised.

Zassler laughed. "This is normal. In the Anarchic Lands, aside from a very few duchies, most rulers are extremely oppressive towards their citizens. After all, war could break out at any time and they might lose their power. Naturally, they'll want to enjoy it while they can."

Linley nodded slightly.

“Fine. Then let’s start with this Blackdirt City,” Linley immediately decided.

The eyes of the nearby Barker brothers lit up. Gates was the first to say excitedly, “Lord, don’t worry. You don’t need to do a thing. We’ll just head on over and kill that leader, and then terrify those few thousand soldiers into submission. There’ll be nothing difficult at all about it.”

The five Barker brothers had led armies to war in the Eighteen Northern Duchies. They very much loved that sort of blood-pumping life.

“Lord, don’t worry. Tonight, you’ll be living inside the governor’s mansion of Blackdirt City.” Barker slapped his chest as he spoke.

Administration

Noon time. The blazing sun hung high in the western skies, baking Blackdirt City with its scorching rays. The garrison soldiers of Blackdirt City were lazily and casually strolling about within Blackdirt City, while a few poor guards were being baked by the sun while standing guard on the walls.

“This damn weather. It is unbearably hot during the day, and deathly cold at night!” a large man dressed in tattered armor cursed softly. Him and the nine companions by his side were one of the squads belonging to the city guard.

Whenever the common citizens of the city saw these soldiers, they immediately fled away, their faces full of fear.

Seeing this, another warrior cursed softly. “Now that I’m working under that greedy, fat pig, some of my elders are beginning to look down at me. That fat pig is too greedy!”

“That motherfucker. If it weren’t for the fact that I have a wife and son to feed, I wouldn’t do this job,” another warrior agreed.

In Blackdirt City, that fat city governor had an extremely poor reputation. These warriors who had joined the army for the sake of feeding their families all secretly cursed this vile city governor behind his back, but they didn’t dare to fight against him. This was because the city governor had an extremely powerful and despotic son, who was a peak-stage warrior of the seventh rank. That sort of power was more than enough for one to become a local tyrant in small cities such as this.

“Faster, faster!” From nearby, the hoof steps of a knight’s horse could be heard coming towards them at high speed. Seeing the soldiers from afar, the knight immediately cried out loudly, “Brothers, quick, come and pay your respects to the new city governor! That greedy, fat pig is dead! Quick, go pay your respects to the new city governor!”

The ten men in the squad were startled. They glanced at each other, then immediately began to laugh with excitement.

“Haha... quick, let’s go to the governor’s mansion.”

In the Anarchic Lands, the common citizens had virtually no sense of belonging. This month, they would be ruled by one city governor; next month, it might be a different one. The commoners didn’t ask for much; they only wanted to have enough to feed themselves and their families.

The governor’s mansion of Blackdirt City could be considered a city within a city.

Blackdirt City’s army was divided into two major battalions, with each battalion having 1800 people. One of the battalions was the city guard, while the other was the city governor’s personal guard. One could imagine how afraid of death the city governor was, to use half of his military force to protect his own mansion.

There were a large number of soldiers currently centered within the city governor’s mansion. All 3600 soldiers quickly assembled there.

The city governor’s mansion could easily fit in 1800 people. Atop a broad training field, Barker and his brothers stood in the center. Their rippling muscles and massive, powerful bodies made them look like gods of battle. Those terrifying black greataxes they carried on their back were especially frightening.

The soldiers all stood there, keeping quiet out of fear.

“Brothers,” a powerful man with short golden hair roared loudly, “That vile, fat pig and his son have already been chopped into meat paste by these five lords. These five lords are all mighty combatants of the ninth rank. Invincible combatants of the ninth rank!!!”

As soon as they heard the words, ‘combatants of the ninth rank’, all of the soldiers were stunned.

“Combatants of the ninth rank? Combatants of the ninth rank would come to a little city like ours?” Whispers could be heard circulating throughout the crowd.

“Bam!” Gates took a few steps forward, his demonically powerful aura causing the nearby soldiers to all take a step back. Gates laughed thunderously, “All of you, listen up. From today onwards, Blackdirt City belongs to we five brothers. My Big Brother, Barker, is the city governor!”

Gates drew out the greataxe from his back. Staring at the surrounding people, he said, “If any of you have any objections to my Big Brother, Barker, being the city governor, you are welcome to come compete with me!”

Who would dare compete against such a terrifying god of battle?

The city governor’s son, who had terrified Blackdirt City for so long, had been chopped to death by a single blow from Gates’ greataxe. Then again, most of the soldiers present hadn’t personally witnessed this themselves. The natural, violent atmosphere of the region caused some of the soldiers to stare at Gates questioningly. Just being physically big didn’t necessarily mean someone was very powerful!

“This greataxe of mine was made from countless precious materials. It weighs 5300 pounds!” Gates casually tossed his greataxe forward, and it soared agilely through the air, landing against a nearby boulder which the soldiers used for weight training.

The ten-thousand-pound boulder didn’t even move when struck. Many of the watching soldiers were stunned. “Could it be that this greataxe is made from wood, and it just has a layer of metallic dye on top of it?”

“Boom!” The boulder suddenly exploded and disintegrated into a storm of dust.

Wielding something heavy as though it were light!

All the onlookers stared with their mouths gaping open. These soldiers had heard of people being able to smash a ten-thousand-pound boulder, but to cause it to instantly disintegrate into a pile of dust... this wasn’t something that could be accomplished just through brute strength. All the soldiers turned to look at Gates with adoration and worship in their eyes.

Gates delightedly let out a thunderous laugh. He had used this technique in the past in the Eighteen Northern Duchies as well. The Anarchic Lands and the

Eighteen Northern Duchies were very similar; powerful experts were deeply venerated.

“Looks like there are no objections,” Gates said loudly. “Wonderful. From today forward, you are now the soldiers of my Big Brother. There’s a benefit to working for my Big Brother. In the future, your military pay will be triple that of your current military pay!”

Triple military pay?

The three thousand plus soldiers stared in shock, but then, they all let out a thunderous, sky-shaking cry...

“Long live Lord Barker!”

What more could they ask for? These five experts possessed unbelievable power, and they gave a very high military pay. Naturally, they loved leaders like this!



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The City of Blackdirt now had a new city governor. It was the mighty Barker and his four brothers, all of whom were powerful warriors of the ninth rank. Their weapons alone weighed 5300 pounds! Having such a powerful leader was something that all of the citizens of Blackdirt City celebrated over.

The most exciting thing was...

The Lord City Governor had declared that as long they were obedient and faithful, the citizens of Blackdirt City would be forever exempted from paying taxes!

Forever exempted from paying taxes! In the Anarchic Lands, this could be described as a miracle. After all, if there were no taxes, where would one have money to pay their soldiers? But this problem, to Linley, was no problem at all. He held the terrifying amount of wealth that the royal clan of the Kingdom of Fenlai had accumulated for thousands of years.

He could casually pull out a hundred million gold coins, and that would

already be more than enough.

Powerful leaders and high salaries, combined with no taxes... given the above, the people here quickly gained the hope and desire to forever live under this administration. And because of the high military pay, many people now desired to join the army.

At the same time, when some of the commoners nearby Blackdirt City learned about this, they hurriedly immigrated to Blackdirt City.



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Half a year after the change in leadership in Blackdirt City.

Within the city governor's mansion. The newly selected housekeeper, Nemi, was currently giving a detailed report to this mysterious 'Lord Ley'. As the administrator for various matters in Blackdirt City, Nemi knew that although the city governor was nominally Barker, in truth, the highest authority here was that mysterious Lord Ley.

"Milord, the population of Blackdirt Town numbers nearly eighty thousand. If we add that number to the large number of surrounding villages, then in total... the population under Blackdirt City's control is a total of around seven hundred thousand. Currently, our military is expanding as well. We now have a total of five battalions, all at full strength. The five battalions number a total of nine thousand soldiers," Nemi said respectfully.

Linley, seated above him, nodded slightly upon hearing this.

"Enough, Nemi. You can retire now." Barker glanced at him.

"Yes, Lord City Governor." Nemi immediately left respectfully.

Right now, the people seated in the room were Linley and the other core members of the team. According to the decision which Zassler and Linley had originally made, to outsiders, they said that Lord Barker was the city governor. 'Barker' was a very ordinary name. Nobody else knew which 'Barker' this was.

"Lord, you really gave us a good scare when you casually brought out a

magicrystal card with a hundred million gold in it.” Barker chortled.

Linley laughed. “Don’t worry about the financial side of things!” In the past, Linley had essentially stripped away thousands of years of accumulated wealth from the Kingdom of Fenlai.

Zassler said, “Linley, the reason we are being so generous to the citizens of Blackdirt City is because we want Blackdirt City to become our strongest, most resilient base, and to make sure that the people here are absolutely loyal to us! It is enough that we exempt this city from paying taxes. In the future, at most, we can just lower the tax rate in our cities. In addition, in order to function well, a nation needs to be able to be self-sufficient. It can’t always rely on outside money. It has to be self-sustaining!”

Linley nodded.

“I don’t know much about managing a country. I’ll let Zassler and Jenne handle these matters.” Linley laughed as he glanced at Jenne. Zassler had controlled a duchy before in the Anarchic Lands, while Jenne had helped her little brother administrate the affairs of the prefectural city of Cerre for multiple years. Both of them knew much more about city management than Linley did.

Jenne nodded and laughed. “Big Brother Linley, the most important part of being a leader is knowing who to use. Just let me handle it.”

Zassler concurred. “Jenne is right. Linley... you are our standard-bearer. In the Anarchic Lands, an ultimate expert has a great deal of influence. Look at the War God. The War God always stays on War God Mountain and never gets personally involved in anything, but everyone understands that so long as the War God is alive, then the O’Brien Empire will never collapse.”

“Lord, in the future, your relationship to our nation will be the same as the War God’s relationship to the O’Brien Empire,” Barker agreed.

Linley nodded slightly. “I understand your reasoning. Oh, right. Yesterday, I took a stroll around Blackdirt City. I saw that a few dozen kilometers northeast of Blackdirt City there is a small mountain known as Mt. Blackraven. I plan to train there.”

Linley could sense the vastness of both the Laws of the Earth and the Laws of

the Wind. Linley wished to spend a large amount of time subsuming himself in them, and spend some time attuning to them and understanding them.



*

In the south-central part of the Anarchic Lands, there was a prefectural city with hundreds of thousands of citizens. Within a room on the fifth floor of a five-story-tall hotel, an old man with white-streaked hair opened a letter, carefully reading its contents.

“What I feared the most has come to pass!” The old man began to frown. “The Emperor ordered us not to act against Linley and just observe him. A while ago, we learned that Linley’s group had entered the Anarchic Lands. At that time, we thought he was just engaging in tourism. Who would’ve thought that they’d take over a city? What exactly are they planning?”

The old man had a bad feeling.

Linley was a major foe of the Radiant Church. A foe that they didn’t want to have to fight.

But now...

“I hope Linley is just messing around and having fun in the Anarchic Lands.” The old man was frowning. What he feared the most was... that Linley had come to the Anarchic Lands expressly to deal with the Radiant Church. “We don’t want to stir up trouble with him, but if he insists on stirring up trouble with us, we’ll have to act.”

The old man was a high-level manager for the Radiant Church in the Anarchic Lands. He knew exactly how powerful Linley’s side was.

“As for now... let’s just watch. Let’s see what Linley plans to do.”



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Outside of Blackdirt City, in a small mountain roughly a thousand meters tall

which was located in the direction of the Forest of Darkness, Linley was seated in the meditative position on the top of a large tree. The treetop swayed along with the blowing wind, and Linley swayed along with it, as gently and as agilely as a leaf.

He was carrying a 3600 pound adamantine heavy sword, and yet he was seated on the crown of a tree. Linley had indeed reached a very high level in his ability to control the wind.

“Slow. Fast. It isn’t that simple...” Linley was constantly pondering his ‘Tempos of the Wind’ technique. The Tempos of the Wind was actually utilizing two contradictory aspects of the wind in perfect harmony, with the clash between these two aspects creating a terrifyingly sharp blade of air.

But Linley was discovering that as he continued to study the individual aspects of ‘Slow’ and ‘Fast’, these aspects had additional astonishing secrets that had yet to be revealed to him.

“The limits to the Profound Truths of Slowness... the limits to the Analytics of Hyperspeed...” Linley was fully absorbed in his meditations on the Elemental Laws. This sort of meditation relied entirely on a single sudden spark of insight. Perhaps Linley would suddenly gain an insight onto the Laws of the Earth, at which point Linley would begin to analyze the Laws of the Earth. If he suddenly gained insight into the Laws of the Wind, he would go study that instead.

Those days he spent in training on Mt. Blackraven passed very quickly...

The Mysterious Mountain Village

The sun was high in the sky. Reynolds was currently hiking through a particularly large mountain.

“I should have entered the Anarchic Lands by now.” Reynolds himself wasn’t too clear how far he had walked, after having hurried for ten days. Reynolds generally headed in whatever direction looked the most desolate. Even if he saw cities from afar, he wouldn’t enter them.

The mountain that Reynolds was now hiking on was extremely large and took up an enormous amount of land.

After hiking for a long time, Reynolds arrived at one of the mountain peaks and gazed around him. Suddenly, he discovered that this giant mountain actually had a tiny little mountain village in the center. Reynolds licked his dry, chapped lips. Grabbing a fistful of long rattan vines, he began to climb down into the little mountain village in the center of the mountain.

This little mountain village had people inside it. When they saw Reynolds walk in, they glanced at him with curious stares.

Clearly... they rarely saw visitors.

There were quite a few people in this little mountain village. Guessing based on what his eyes had seen, Reynolds estimated that there were several thousand people here. There was even an open-air inn that was rather simply made. Reynolds walked over and immediately sat down and said, “Two cups of water, and then some dishes and a bottle of wine.”

But as soon as he sat down, Reynolds noticed something...

“This place...” Reynolds’ heart shook.

He had suddenly discovered that every single person here emanated the aura of an expert. From what Reynolds could tell, there were many warriors of the

sixth and seventh ranks, and even warriors of the eighth rank... as well as some mighty magi. Not warriors. Magi. And extremely powerful ones.

“Friend, how did you end up here?” A bald man came over with a bottle of wine and two bowls. “Come, let’s drink.”

Reynolds now sensed that this mountain village was no ordinary place. He immediately replied, “I came from across the border with the Rohault Empire. I was planning to enter the Anarchic Lands. I didn’t take any of the main roads, and hiked my way through the mountains to the north. Whenever I encountered a river, I swam my way through. Whenever I encountered a mountain, I hiked through. I didn’t expect that while hiking through this mountain, I would’ve run into this little mountain village.”

The bald man nodded and laughed. “So that’s the case.”

“No wonder. There’s no roads near our village, and this mountain is extremely desolate. Generally speaking, we’ll usually go eight or ten years without seeing a single outsider.” Another man walked over, laughing.

Reynolds was growing anxious.

The two people in front of him were both exceedingly powerful, perhaps at the seventh or the eighth rank.

“What in the world is this place? Why are there so many experts here?” Reynolds secretly wondered.

Drinking and chatting with these two people, Reynolds discovered... that the people of this mysterious mountain village weren’t totally cut off from the outside world. In fact, they knew a great deal about the outside world.

“Princess Monica is coming,” the bald man suddenly said. Many people turned to look in one direction, and Reynolds did as well...

He saw a beautiful young woman with long jade hair walk over with a serving maid behind her, while greeting the other villagers along the way warmly. Seeing this beautiful woman, Reynolds instantly was stunned. That beautiful face... that friendly smile...

Despite often having dalliances amidst the flowers, Reynolds felt utterly

bewitched and smitten.

“I think...I have found the place I was meant to be.”

The playboy Reynolds had dallied with quite a few young noble ladies. But there hadn't been a single person who had successfully moved his heart... which was why he was still single up till now. But this girl in this mysterious mountain village had a very unique aura, one that made Reynolds' heart shake.

The girl named Monica glanced at Reynolds. Reynolds instantly discovered that Monica's clear eyes contained a hint of jade light. She looked like one of the legendary spirits, utterly bewitching. Monica laughed and spoke to him. “Hello there, outsider.”

Reynolds immediately rose to his feet and said with great courtesy, “Beautiful Princess Monica, my name is Reynolds.”

Monica suddenly glanced at Reynolds' left hand. She opened her mouth in surprise, then looked at Reynolds. “What happened to your hand?”

“It was injured by someone,” Reynolds said casually.

Monica immediately walked towards him. “Stretch your hand out.” Reynolds didn't ask any questions, immediately stretching his left hand out. The wound that had been left by those steel pincers was heart-shakingly frightful to behold. Monica's lips began to move slightly, and a short while later...

Countless specks of light entered Reynolds left hand like a mirage-like nebula. Reynolds could clearly sense that the wound on his left hand was rapidly healing, and two new fingers were growing out from it. In the blink of an eye, Reynolds' left hand returned to a perfect state, as though it had never been injured.

“This... this...” Reynolds was shocked, and he stared at the young lady named Monica in surprise.

He hadn't expected that this young lady named Monica was a light-style magus, and an extremely powerful one. Her power wasn't one whit inferior to Reynolds'.

When Reynolds saw the look of concentration on Monica's face, his heart

immediately began to thump wildly.



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Nightfall. The sun was setting in the west, and the skies had a large amount of red, flame-like clouds.

On the grass by the mountain village, Reynolds and Monica were walking side by side. Reynolds looked at Monica's beautiful face, and in his heart, he felt a hint of contentment. He had already stayed here in this mysterious mountain village for more than a month now.

No one in the mountain village had suggested that he leave.

During his month in the mountain village, Reynolds had learned that the vast majority of the villagers here had never left the mountain village. Only a very small percentage would occasionally make trips to the outside world. When they returned, they would inform the other villagers of the events of the outside world.

Monica was only twenty years old, but she was already a light-style magus of the seventh rank. In terms of talent, she was actually superior to Reynolds. She was even more talented than Reynolds.

"I can't continue like this. I have to inform my parents and Third Bro that I am alive." Reynolds wanted to meet his friends and family, but Monica's allure for him was simply too strong. And to Monica, this outsider, Reynolds, knew many things. Whenever she chatted with him, Monica found that she could learn many things about the outside world.

Reynolds was particularly good at making conversation. This made Monica very happy whenever she was with him.

"If I were to always be with Monica, how wonderful would that be?" Reynolds' heart was filled with hope.

"Miss Monica," a voice suddenly came from behind them, and a silver-haired middle-aged man walked towards them. Reynolds was startled. He hadn't noticed this man approach them. Clearly, the man was extremely powerful.

“Uncle Miller.” When Monica turned her head and saw this middle-aged man with short silver hair, she immediately called out in laughter.

Miller had a simple, honest face. Glancing at Reynolds, he then laughed towards Monica in a friendly manner. “Miss Monica, it is getting late. Your mother is waiting for you to go home and eat dinner.” Monica nodded, then smiled towards Reynolds. “Big Brother Reynolds, I’m going home for now. See you later.”

Reynolds smiled and nodded as well.

After Monica left, Miller stared at Reynolds. “Outsider kid, you’ve been in our mountain village for some time now. You now need to make a choice...”

“Choice?” Reynolds felt surprised.

Miller nodded calmly. “Since you’ve been able to find us, that means that destiny has led you here. You now have two choices. The first is to forever stay in our mountain village, and become one of our villagers, never to leave. The second is to immediately leave, and never enter again. You only have two choices. If you disobey, you will definitely die.”

These cold, calm words made Reynolds’ heart quiver.

Leave forever? Or never leave the mountain village again?

Reynolds didn’t want to make either choice.

“Mr. Miller,” Reynolds hurriedly said, “Based on what I know, aren’t there some people in the village who occasionally go outside?”

Miller glanced at him, then chuckled. “True. Our mountain village has a yearly contest. Anyone who makes it into the top ten during this tournament is permitted to leave the village and make a trip to the outside world. But given your current power... you aren’t even able to rank in our top hundred, much less top ten.”

Reynolds was very anxious.

“Although I currently can’t make the ranking, in the future I might.” Reynolds had already made his decision. “Mr. Miller, I have decided to become a member of this village.” Although Reynolds loved his parents, when he was in the army,

he often went a year or two without seeing his parents a single time. So long as his parents knew that he was alive, that was all that matter. In the future, he would have a chance to meet them. There shouldn't be too much of a problem.

Reynolds knew that his parents could definitely live for another century or two.

But Monica... Reynolds was worried that if he left, he would regret it for the rest of his life.

Miller nodded slightly. "Welcome to the village. Remember. You are not allowed to leave the village without permission. If it is discovered that you did... you will definitely die. No matter what, you had best not harbor any doubts about how powerful our village is." Miller immediately turned and prepared to leave.

"Mr. Miller," Reynolds said hurriedly.

Miller turned to look at him. "What is it?"

"When the other people in the village leave, can they help me carry a message out?" Reynolds asked.

Miller nodded. "Yes they can. However, you cannot reveal any information regarding the village. In two days, I'll be leaving the village. If you have any messages, I can help you transmit them."

Reynolds felt a surge of joy, and he hurriedly said, "Lord Miller, when you leave the village, please go to any of the Dawson Conglomerate's branches and tell them that I, Reynolds Dunstan, am not dead. Right now, I am happily alive, and I hope my friends and family won't be worried about me."

"The Dawson Conglomerate?" Miller glanced at him, then nodded.

"Lord Miller," Reynolds suddenly realized something. "Didn't you just say that only the top ten in the annual tournament are allowed to make a trip? Why is it that you can leave whenever you want?"

Miller glanced at him. "Once you are at my level of power, you can also leave whenever you wish." As he spoke, with a single movement Miller suddenly vanished from in front of Reynolds. Reynolds' heart was filled with shock; this

speed was simply too terrifying!

“Milord, that Reynolds isn’t very powerful, but it seems as though Miss Monica feels rather...” Miller stood to one side respectfully, while a handsome, refined-looking middle-aged man with long black hair sat on a stone chair, casually sipping wine.

The refined middle-aged man laughed calmly. “Monica is free to like whoever she wants. Don’t force her. For Reynolds to choose to remain in the village means that he has courage, at least.”

“But the Madame...” Miller said.

The refined middle-aged man laughed. “Haha... as for that, there’s nothing I can do either. If that Reynolds really has taken a liking to my daughter, then all I can do is suggest that he work hard. Otherwise, he won’t even be able to pass my wife’s approval.”

“Tomorrow, when you head to the Forest of Darkness, be careful. Don’t irritate the King of the Forest of Darkness.” The refined middle-aged man glanced at Miller.

“Yes, milord,” Miller said respectfully.

The next morning, a blur suddenly streaked out at high speed away from the mountain village. In the blink of an eye, it pierced through the skies as it flew towards the north at high speed. The speed at which it travelled was a good deal faster than even Linley’s speed in full Dragonform. An hour or so later, that blur arrived at the Forest of Darkness.

“Hrm?” The astonishing speed lessened, and from high up above, Miller stared down below.

Blackdirt City was located quite close to the Forest of Darkness, only fifty or so kilometers away from it. Miller was currently directly above Mt. Blackraven. Although he had been flying at high speed, he could sense a powerful amount of wind-style energy coming from below.

“Someone else who also trains in the Laws of the Wind?” Miller’s eyes lit up.

Miller was studying the Laws of the Wind as well. He carefully examined Mt.

Blackraven, and saw a human form, dressed in a deep blue robe who was wielding a violet longsword. That human form constantly flickered about in multiple places in Mt. Blackraven at an astonishingly fast speed.

“His level of understanding is quite excellent. It has been centuries since I’ve sparred with another wind-style expert.” Miller’s heart itched. He flew down at high speed.

By now, Linley had noticed this human form flying down from the skies at high speed.

Miller landed directly atop the crown of a tree on Mt. Blackraven. Standing on the tree’s crown, he stared at the nearby Linley and laughed loudly, “I am Miller, also a student of the Laws of the Wind. My friend, would you be willing to have a competition with me?”

Linley and Olivier

Linley looked at the man standing on the tree crown.

His short silver hair made him look very energetic and intrepid. That wavy blue robe fluttered in the wind, making him seem agile and graceful.

“An expert!” Linley had the feeling that this silver-haired man’s power was no less than his own.

“I am Linley.” Linley didn’t try to hide his identity.

“Linley? The O’Brien Empire’s Linley?” Miller said with surprise, but then he laughed. “I’ve long heard that the O’Brien Empire has a twenty-seven-year-old genius, who has reached a high level of achievement as a sculptor, as a magus, and as a warrior. I didn’t expect that today, I’d be able to encounter you. You were on par with Haydson. I, Miller, would like to spar with you, brother.”

Linley had a very good impression of Miller as well.

Miller was open and direct, just the type of person Linley liked.

“Very well. Then I will have a good sparring match with you, brother Miller.” Having spent such a long period of time in training, Linley also desired to have a good sparring match against an expert. Perhaps he would gain a sudden insight.

Linley removed the deep blue robe covering his upper body, letting it be bare. And then, black scales quickly began to cover Linley’s body, and those ferocious spikes emerged from his forehead, spine, elbows, and knees. Seeing this, Miller’s eyes lit up. “Dragonblood Warrior. Haha, I’ve heard of this for some time now...”

Linley’s body began to be covered with that roiling, swirling layer of azurish-black battle-qi.

Wielding Bloodviolet in his hands, Linley looked at Miller. “Come.”

With a flip of his hand, Miller withdrew a silvery-white longsword from out of nowhere. Laughing loudly, he said, “Linley, you must be careful. The power of my sword technique isn’t much weaker than Haydson’s attack,” Miller spoke with total confidence. Linley was secretly startled. Linley knew very well how powerful Haydson’s “Worldbreaker” attack was.

“Careful!” Miller shouted loudly, then his body slashed through the air, immediately appearing next to Linley.

With a kick of his feet, Linley leapt backwards at high speed, but Miller’s longsword still brushed against Linley’s Pulseguard Defense. In the blink of an eye, Linley appeared atop a large tree several hundred meters away. “Such incredible speed. It seems I have to use the Windshadow spell.”

From this exchange, Linley immediately understood that in terms of understanding the ‘Speed’ aspect of the wind, he was inferior to this man.

Linley began to chant the words to the Windshadow magic spell. As for Miller, he paused for a while, still wielding that silver longsword as he waited for Linley to complete his Windshadow spell. Only when Linley finished did Miller charge towards Linley at high speed again. “Linley, show me your ultimate attack.”

“Whoosh!” “Whoosh!”

Linley’s body moved at a similarly high speed. Right now, the two were on par as far as speed went, and they dodged and attacked at high speed. Towards the attacking Miller, with a flip of his hand, Linley utilized the ‘Rippling Wind’ technique, and in an instant, countless violet sword tips slashed down, covering Miller’s entire body.

“Excellent!” Miller laughed loudly, and suddenly, the silvery-white longsword seemed to slowly draw a circle in front of him.

Although it seemed to be slow, in actuality, before Linley’s ‘Rippling Wind’ attacks managed to land on Miller, they were all destroyed by that ‘circle’. Linley was secretly delighted. “Has Miller trained in a type of extremely ‘Slow’ aspect of the wind?”

Slow. Fast!

The so called ‘slow’ and ‘fast’ weren’t purely about ‘speed’; it was about a

higher level of understanding. For example, although Miller's attack seemed to be slow, in actuality, it wasn't the slightest bit slower than Linley's 'Rippling Wind' technique.

"Miller, take another one of my attacks," Linley shouted loudly.

Linley and Miller were constantly dodging. With each light tap against the tree leaves, the two could instantly change direction at high speed. Suddenly, the two once again clashed in the air above Mt. Blackraven. Linley's dreamlike Bloodviolet longsword seemed to encompass both an extremely fast speed as well as an extremely slow tempo, combining these two polar opposites into a single seemingly perfect whole.

"Excellent," Miller let out a loud shout of surprised joy.

Miller's longsword suddenly reduced in speed to an extremely low level, as though it weighed ten trillion pounds and could barely move. Linley could sense how extremely slothful the movements of the opponent's sword had become!

But his Bloodviolet sword remained unable to break through this sword.

"Boom!" The two swords collided.

Linley felt as though he had suddenly been hit at high speed by something weighing ten trillion pounds. His body shuddered and was sent flying against the nearby mountain cliffs, smashing into the heart of the mountain. On the cliffs, a human-shaped tunnel could now be seen.

"Whoosh." A while later, Linley came flying back out.

Miller was extremely excited. "Linley, your sword art... 'Slow' and 'Fast'? Two completely opposite aspects. This... this..." Miller felt as though a light had gone off inside his mind, as though he had suddenly realized something. Linley was also extremely shocked and delighted as well.

Linley didn't even care about that line of blood trailing down from the corner of his lips. The only thing he was thinking about was that sword technique his opponent had just used. "Miller defended against my 'Rippling Wind' attack using a technique which was as gentle as a breeze. But this technique he just used was extremely powerful, not one whit inferior to Haydson's 'Worldbreaker' technique. If it wasn't for the fact that I have gained some

additional insights into the ‘Throbbing Pulse of the World’, I probably would’ve been severely injured.”

“That sword technique was derived from a variation of the ‘Slow’ aspect of the Laws of the Wind. During that moment, it seemed as though space itself had frozen.” Linley could still clearly remember how he had felt when facing that sword.

That sword had moved so slowly, as though it weighed ten trillion pounds, but space itself seemed to have frozen as well. Linley had clearly sensed that his opponent’s sword was extremely slow, but despite the fact that his own sword was extremely fast, in that moment, it somehow wasn’t faster than his opponent’s.

Miller and Linley both had looks of surprised delight on their face. They smiled, standing there in mid-air.

Recovering from their ponderings, the two looked at each other and grinned. Clearly, both had gained certain insights.

“Linley, I had never imagined that two opposite aspects could actually be used to aid each other... you truly have helped me out.” Miller was a little bit excited. Indeed, in that mysterious mountain village, none of his friends trained in the Laws of the Wind, and thus they were unable to help him.

Linley spoke words of thanks as well. “Miller, I’ve been pondering how to continue analyzing the ‘Slow’ and ‘Fast’ aspect and how to train them. You’ve helped me clearly see how I should go about it as well.”

“As far as my insights into the Laws of the Wind go, I don’t have any deeper insights to show you. Let’s just call a stop to it for now. What do you say?” Linley advised.

Miller pursed his lips. “Linley, don’t be modest. I know... that your true, most powerful attack is with a heavy sword. Supposedly, despite Haydson’s ridiculously strong defense, he was still heavily injured by you. Come. Let me have a try,” Miller said expectantly.

Linley hesitated slightly.

Once the ‘Profound Truths of the Earth’ was used, it would be very

dangerous. It might kill him.

“It’s fine. Linley, just come. Let me have a taste of your most powerful attack. My defense is extremely formidable.” Miller laughed confidently.

Seeing how confident the man was and how he had requested Linley repeatedly to attack, Linley nodded. At the same time, Linley had made up his mind that he would execute the Hundred Layered Waves attack of the Profound Truths of the Earth. He wouldn’t go all the way to his limits of 138 Layered Waves. Given the power his opponent had displayed, he should be able to withstand the Hundred Layered Waves.

In the air above Mt. Blackraven, Linley and Miller stood, facing each other. Linley was now wielding the adamantine heavy sword.

“Come,” Miller said with a bit of excitement.

“Miller, be careful.” As he spoke, Linley suddenly charged towards Miller, creating a terrifying sonic boom. Miller just stood there, casually wielding his silvery longsword and slowly waving it in front of himself.

Space once again froze.

Linley’s adamantine heavy sword agilely and lightly smashed downwards. A silvery longsword that was very light, but seemingly weighed ten trillion pounds. An adamantine heavy sword that was very heavy, yet seemed to move very agilely and gracefully. As soon as the adamantine heavy sword drew near that silver longsword, it was caught within the ‘frozen space’.

The two swords intersected!

“Boom!”

Profound Truths of the Earth – Hundred Layered Waves!

What shocked Linley was that when those vibrational waves passed through that ‘frozen space’, it quickly began to weaken in power. By the time it passed through and entered Miller’s body, it had lost more than half of its power.

But despite that...

Miller’s eyes lit up. His entire body suddenly was surrounded by waves of energy, but despite that, a hint of blood still came out from the corner of his

lips. He stared at Linley in astonishment. “Linley, your attack truly is bizarre. My defense can be considered a very special one, but your attack...”

When experts did battle, they had to be proficient in speed, defense, and attack. If they were weak in a single area, then they would find themselves in danger.

Miller’s defense was very special as well.

As he circulated the Dragonblood battle-qi in his body, Linley’s wounds rapidly began to heal, but he stared at Miller in astonishment. “Miller, that sword of yours... I keep on having the feeling that it seems to have caused space itself to change.” It was precisely because space had changed that Linley’s vibrational attacks would weaken so much when passing through it.

Miller laughed. “It does indeed cause space to change. I can’t clearly explain it. When you gain insight on this aspect, you will naturally understand it.”

Linley nodded slightly as he returned to his human form.

“Alright, then. Linley, I’m very glad to have met you today and made friends with you. If you ever want to come looking for me, you can come to the southern reaches of the Anarchic Lands. There’s a relatively well-known city there known as ‘Southmount City’. Roughly a hundred kilometers south of Southmount City is a large mountain, and within that mountain there is a small mountain village. I live there.” Miller laughed.

Linley nodded in appreciation. “When I am free, I will definitely go.”

“Several of my good friends, as well as my Lord, live there as well. If you come there and spar, you will improve more quickly as well,” Miller said warmly. “I have some business in the Forest of Darkness. I’ll have to bid you farewell for now.”

After saying his goodbyes to Miller, Linley watched as Miller rapidly flew towards the north, into the endless Forest of Darkness. Then Linley chuckled and, with a leap, flew to a nearby flat stone. He sat down atop of it into the meditative posture, quietly reflecting on the insights he had gained on various profound mysteries during that sparring match...



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To the north of the Yulan continent was the boundless Northern Sea. North of the Northern Sea was the Arctic Icecap. The Arctic Icecap was extremely vast, several times larger than the entire Yulan continent. However, aside from some powerful magical beasts who lived there, there were virtually no inhabitants. The Arctic Icecap was formed from nothing more than extremely hard ice.

“Whoooooosh.”

Cold wind slashed past the glaciers like icy knives, shearing pieces of ice off. The Arctic Icecap was an extremely cold place, and extremely dangerous. Even powerful warriors would find it very hard to live here. However, this bitter, desolate environment did have a few experts who lived here quietly.

Beneath an iceberg that was tens of thousands of meters high, two experts engaged in battle at high speed. One of them was Olivier, with his opponent being a very well-muscled, yet skinny, cruel looking man with short jade hair. The cruel-looking man was using nothing more than a pair of dark golden boxing gloves.

“Whoosh!” Lightshadow flashing, Olivier appeared in the air above the cruel-looking man, then chopped downwards with his sword.

The cruel-looking man dodged this attack, and then immediately viciously kicked out with his leg against Olivier. On the surface of the leg was a clearly visible edge of air, and it chopped against Olivier like a warblade. The blade of air was far more distinct and visible than the one produced by Linley’s ‘Tempos of the Wind’ technique.

“Boom!”

Olivier and his sword were both sent flying by this kick, landing and smashing viciously against the tough, frozen ground. “Boom!” The icy ground split apart, and dozens of enormous cracks appeared. Olivier vomited a mouthful of fresh blood onto the ground.

“Hmph. Olivier, you dare challenge Lord Rutherford? You can’t even beat me.

In the Arctic Icecap, you are nothing more than the bottom rung. Train hard,” the cruel-looking man said coldly. The cruel-looking man then flew into the skies at high speed, disappearing into that enormous iceberg that was tens of thousands of meters high.

Olivier coughed once, then stood up. Staring upwards at the iceberg, he said, “Next time, I will definitely defeat you.” And then, Olivier’s body flickered, then disappeared from the snowy land.

Part II

Baruch

Delia and Linley

“Whooooosh.” The desolate cold wind blew across the world, bringing countless snowflakes to cover it.

Delia, wearing a white fur robe, was standing quietly in front of a window, staring at the outside world. Behind her were two magical beasts. One was the Worldbear, Hatton. The other was the Wildthunder Stormhawk, Parry. Neither of the two beasts made a sound.

A sigh escaped from Delia’s lips.

“Father, mother...” A bitter smile was on Delia’s face. She really hadn’t expected her parents to deceive her. They had told her that her grandmother was seriously ill, but after she raced home on the back of the Wildthunder Stormhawk, she had discovered that her grandmother was quite healthy.

That very first night back...

Delia had angrily asked her parents, “Father, mother, why did you two lie to me to get me home?”

Delia had originally intended to stay with Linley.

Delia’s father, Dylla Leon, had looked at Delia and had asked her, “Delia, have you fallen for that Dragonblood Warrior, Linley? Ever since you first returned those many years ago, you refused to accept any other boys. Was it because of him?”

Delia had been very surprised. She hadn’t told her parents.

“How did you know?” Delia had immediately asked.

Her mother had sighed. “Delia, why didn’t you tell us how you felt? It was your master, Master Longhaus, who informed us upon returning to the Empire. He told us to prepare for the wedding between you and Linley.”

The previously furious Delia had suddenly become bashful.

Her parents had glanced at each other, shaking their heads and smiling bitterly. Her father, Dylla, had said seriously, "My beloved daughter, I must solemnly tell you that it is impossible for you and Linley to be together."

"What?" Delia had stared at her father.

Her father had said seriously, "Delia, Linley's younger brother is the husband of the Seventh Imperial Princess of the O'Brien Empire. Without question, Linley is a Saint belonging to the O'Brien Empire. But you should understand the state of the relationship between our Yulan Empire and the O'Brien Empire."

"True, both our Yulan Empire and the O'Brien Empire are two mighty Empires who are enemies to each other, but what does that have to do with Linley?"

Delia had been very upset. "Could it be that you believe, father, that me being with Linley would impact the clan?"

"Yes."

Dylla Leon had nodded. "If a clan were to have a Saint, that clan would rise up and flourish. If you and Linley were to marry... then what happens if the Yulan Empire and the O'Brien Empire were to engage in a large-scale war? Our Empire would no longer dare to have much faith in the Leon clan."

Delia immediately had become enraged.

Her father's explanation had seemed laughable.

"Delia, think about it. If you were the Emperor and you discovered that the daughter of one of your largest clans had gotten married to a Saint on the enemy's side, wouldn't you be concerned that this clan would betray him?" Dylla Leon had said seriously.

Delia had been stunned.

There was nothing she could say, because there were historical precedents for this.

In the past, a daughter of a noble clan in the Rohault Empire had married the king of one of the kingdoms of the great plains to the far east. Afterwards, her entire clan had rebelled and joined the side of that great plains kingdom.

Don't think that the Rohault Empire was necessarily far stronger than the kingdoms of the great plains.

The great plains to the far east had three kingdoms in total.

The people of the great plains were extremely violent, and each of them were born warriors. Although in terms of population, they were far lower in number than the Rohault Empire and the Rhine Empire, these three major kingdoms had done battle with the two Empires for countless years without being at any disadvantage.

"Father, Linley and I..." Delia had begun to speak.

Dylla Leon had interrupted her. "Delia. You are a smart child. You should understand everything. Our Leon clan has been building ourselves up for a thousand years. That's why we now have our current status. If you were to marry Linley, even if his Imperial Majesty didn't actually do anything to our clan, without question... his Imperial Majesty's faith in our clan would be lessened!"

"Once his faith in us is lessened, the countless descendants of our clan in the military and in the government will find it very hard to be promoted." Dylla Leon sighed. "Delia, I hope you can consider the interests of the clan."

"But father, Linley doesn't belong to the O'Brien Empire. He has gone to the Anarchic Lands," Delia had hurriedly said.

"The Anarchic Lands?" Dylla Leon had been startled, and Delia's mother had also stared at her in surprise.

Delia had hurriedly explained, "Yes, father. Linley isn't attached to the O'Brien Empire. He wants to start his own undertakings in the Anarchic Lands. In the future, he will be part of the Anarchic Lands. Father... the Anarchic Lands and our Empire aren't enemies, right?"

Dylla had been silent for a moment before nodding slowly.

This was indeed the case. In the entire continent, the only force that was worthy of the Yulan Empire considering it their enemy was the O'Brien Empire.

As for the Anarchic Lands, who would consider these chaotic lands which had several dozen duchies an enemy?

“If Linley truly were to establish himself in the Anarchic Lands, then it wouldn’t be a problem for you to marry him,” Dylla Leon had said slowly. These words had been like heavenly music to Delia’s ears, making her heart instantly calm down.

Dylla Leon had looked at Delia and said solemnly, “My beloved daughter, I must remind you... only when the day comes when Linley is no longer a member of the O’Brien Empire in the eyes of the imperial clan, will you be permitted to be with him. Otherwise, you definitely cannot.”

“Father, I understand.” Delia loved her parents, her grandparents, her older brother, her cousins, and the rest of her family. She didn’t want to break off her relationships to them.

Dylla had nodded. “For now, stay in the imperial capital. Don’t go looking for that Linley.”



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Thinking back to that conversation, Delia gently sighed again. Delia understood... Linley was already a Saint and had an unlimited lifespan. As a magus of the seventh rank, she herself would have a long lifespan as well, as she continued to train.

She wasn’t too worried about a year or two.

Staring out of the window towards the north, she saw the large, feather-like snowflakes slowly drift down. The entire world seemed so hazy, and nothing could be clearly seen. But Delia’s gaze seemed to pierce through the walls of reality and see into the distant Anarchic Lands, and see into Blackdirt City...



*

Outside Blackdirt City, one squad of soldiers after another were running laps on the black dirt, and alongside each squad, there was a military officer constantly shouting, “Faster, faster! Don’t get left behind! Goddamnit, if you

get left behind, no breakfast for you!”

On an uplifted area, the fourth of the Barker brothers, Boone, and the fifth, Gates, were clad in just a pair of long pants, their upper bodies bare. They watched the training proceed.

During this period of time, Blackdirt City hadn't attacked any other cities. They had only been training. The cities around Blackdirt City had all sensed that Blackdirt would pose a threat to them, and their city governors were very nervous. But at the same time, those city governors didn't dare to attack first either.

Suddenly, Linley walked over. He watched the soldiers train while heading towards Gates and Boone.

“Lord, what do you think?” Gates asked proudly.

Linley nodded with satisfaction. “Very good. Oh, right. When do you plan to begin attacking the nearby cities?” Linley didn't know a single thing about military tactics. The only thing he knew was that unless things came to a critical juncture, there was no need for him to get involved.

Boone laughed heartily. “Lord, we haven't attacked anybody yet, but some people from the nearby cities have already surrendered to us and promised that they would undermine their cities from the inside.”

“Oh, is that so?” Linley laughed as well.

Gates hurriedly said, “Of course, how could we make this up? Lord, think about it. After the power of we five brothers spread across the Anarchic Lands, many of the nearby cities are terrified of us. In order to deal with those cities, after all, we don't even need to mobilize our armies. Just by ourselves, we five brothers can slaughter our path into those cities and easily take victory.”

Linley laughed again.

To this sort of small city, a single expert could decide everything. For example, the city army of Blackdirt City numbered only a few thousand people. A warrior of the ninth rank could easily kill that many people. Alternately, he could directly kill the leader and force the rest to surrender!

Attacking a duchy, however, was different.

Each duchy had perhaps around a hundred thousand soldiers. Similarly, if in the future, they were to fight against the Radiant Church, perhaps the enemy would have a huge number of soldiers. Against this sort of human wave tactics, how many people could a single expert kill? However, a magus in this sort of situation would be extremely useful.

But as long as there were no Saint-level magi about, when two armies engaged in wide-scale warfare against each other, the quality and the ability of each armies' soldiers was of paramount importance.

"What are you training them in?" Linley frowned as he looked at these scattered squads.

Boone explained, "Lord, this is the training of a medium-sized brigade. Each battalion is split into a brigade of three hundred people who will train together. Each brigade has a captain and six lieutenants who are in charge of supervising and training. This is a very effective way of training."

Gates and Boone had trained soldiers before in the Eighteen Northern Duchies. They knew what the best methods were.

After coming to Blackdirt City and learning what the situation was, Linley returned to Mt. Blackraven.

Like an ephemeral blue trail of smoke, Linley wisped back into the depths of Mt. Blackraven. Linley currently lived in the center of a beautiful lake in Mt. Blackraven, which had several boulders in the center covering several dozen square meters. Linley had found those boulders from elsewhere in Mt. Blackraven, then with his sword, chopped them flat, then moved them to the center of the lake to serve as his base.

In the center of the lake, the boulders were only half a meter or so higher than the surface of the lake. There, atop those boulders, Linley had built himself a wooden house.

"Bebe, what are you up to?" Linley walked atop the water, gracefully arriving at the center of the lake. But when he did so, Linley suddenly discovered that Bebe was digging at the side of one of the boulders.

“Boss!” Bebe turned his head and chortled at Linley, while at the same time his sharp little claws continued to swipe at the edge of the rocks, sending debris everywhere. “I’m making a flight of stairs. I’m going to make a few stairs over here. That way, in the future when I get into the water, I can choose to either rest on the stairs, or lie in the water. That’ll be so comfortable. Boss, aren’t I, Bebe, simply the smartest?”

Linley began to laugh.

“Slash, slash.” Swiping with his claws, Bebe gradually dug out the six steps of stairs, with each step roughly ten centimeters high, with the last one in the water itself. Bebe sat his rear down on the bottommost step, happily whacking the water with his four limbs.

Linley chuckled. Seeing the stones lying around the lake, Linley waved a single hand...

“Whoosh!” A sudden wind began to howl, and a terrifying tornado appeared, picking up a human-sized boulder and depositing it in front of Linley. The beautiful surroundings of Mt. Blackraven had made Linley feel very peaceful, and he couldn’t help but think about the person who was in his heart.

Linley’s lips quirked upwards slightly, a hint of a smile on his face.

With a flip of his hand, he withdrew his straight chisel and began to carve the sculpture. Pieces of rock flew everywhere. Slowly... a human-sized model began to appear from within the boulder. Bebe, his small claws resting on the stairs, raised his head to stare at the sculpture.

“Oh ho, Boss, you’re carving a woman? Haha, I know, it has to be Delia!” Bebe snickered.

But Linley was totally absorbed in his carving. His straight chisel flashed as fast as lightning, carrying with it the soft, gentle grace of the wind. Having already reached the grandmaster level of sculpting, Linley was now perfectly capable of carving anything he desired.

Linley was entirely focused on his carving, and the details began to appear...

From morning until three in the afternoon of the next day. After having spent more than a day and a night, Linley finally put down his straight chisel.

“Whew.” Linley lightly exhaled, blowing the fine dust off from the sculpture. The woman he had sculpted possessed a unique, heroic aura. In particular, her eyes... they made the stone sculpture look as though it was truly alive.

Linley looked at the sculpture with satisfaction, then turned to stare towards the southwest. In his heart, he thought to himself, “Delia, you should have received my letter by now.”

Two Letters

Although Linley's first love had ended in failure and caused Linley to develop an aversion towards love, Delia's repeated actions, since the time they had known each other as children, had forced Linley to admit... that he enjoyed being together with Delia. He enjoyed that sort of warm, intimate feeling.

At the Institute, Linley already knew how Delia felt about him.

He knew that Delia was waiting for him to make the first move, but after his first love had failed, Linley's heart had become knotted, and he simply couldn't.

Far away, in the imperial capital of the Yulan continent, although the sun was high in the sky, the world was still extremely cold. Delia was wearing an expensive, thick robe as she sat in her courtyard, enjoying the rays of the sun. In her hands was a letter that Linley had sent her. This letter had come to her via the high-speed information network of the Dawson Conglomerate.

Holding the letter in her hands, Delia couldn't help but laugh, laugh with great joy.

"Delia, what are you looking at?" a thick, heavy sound rang out. It was the Worldbear, Hatton. Hatton's adorable bear eyes stared at the letter in Delia's hands. "C'mon, Delia, lemme see it. Let Big Yellow be happy with you."

The Worldbear, Hatton, was on exceedingly close terms with Delia.

As soon as Delia saw Hatton, she immediately hid the letter away, wrinkling her nose and snorting at him. "Big Yellow, are you causing trouble again? Where's Teacher? Why aren't you by Teacher's side?"

The Worldbear shook his head. "Master is engaging in closed door meditation training. He won't be coming out for the next ten days or half a month. He doesn't need me by his side right now. So, Big Yellow has come to find Delia." The Worldbear beamed at Delia.

Delia was in a fine mood today as well, and so she continued jesting with the Worldbear for a while.

“Delia, that letter is from Linley, right?” the Worldbear suddenly asked in a lowered voice.

Delia glanced with vexation at him, but she still nodded. Delia’s eyes were filled with irrepressible excitement. Linley’s letter had clearly detailed how his life had been, and had also told Delia that he was currently in Blackdirt City, in the Anarchic Lands. He even gave Delia clear instructions on how to get there.

Although Linley didn’t explicitly say that he wanted Delia to come visit him, just based on how carefully he described the route to the city, his intentions were quite clear.

“That silly man. He’s always trying to hide his intentions. If he wants me to go, he should say so.” Delia both laughed and cursed him in her heart.

Delia was in such a mood that just sitting there by herself, she would start giggling. The Worldbear, next to Delia, continually chatted with her as well.

“Delia, tomorrow is the Yulan Festival. Will you go back tonight?” the Worldbear, Hatton, asked softly.

Delia, hearing these words, couldn’t help but frown. Letting out a sigh, she said, “Yeah. Tonight, the entire clan will be coming together. Ugh... I really don’t want to go back.” During this period of time, each of the two times Delia had gone back, her clansmen had exhorted her to forget about Linley.

However...

Was that possible?

When Delia had believed Linley dead, she had even made up her mind to never marry. Ten full years had passed like that. Now that she knew Linley was alive, and would soon set up his own dominion, how could she give him up now?

That night.

All of the important members of the Leon clan were in attendance at this banquet. Nearly a hundred important clan members happily chatted and

toasted each other, and this noble procession naturally included the clan leader, Dylla Leon. Not only was Dylla Leon himself quite accomplished, his two children were incredible as well.

Dixie was a magus of the eighth rank, and the personal disciple of the High Priest.

Delia had reached the seventh rank years ago, and was the disciple of the Saint-level Grand Magus, Master Longhaus.

These two children truly were extremely amazing.

Today, although Delia didn't put on much makeup, the combination of her noble, aristocratic bearing and her natural good looks made Delia appear more dazzling than any of the young noble ladies. Only, Delia headed to a corner of the main hall with her wine goblet in hand.

A middle-aged person walked towards Dylla Leon with goblet in hand, glancing at Delia. Laughing, he said, "Big Brother, Delia truly is growing more and more beautiful. Quite a few young noblemen in the imperial capital have been smitten by her."

Dylla Leon laughed calmly.

"Big Brother, the son of Prince Reed has always been enamored of Delia. Do you think there is a chance that the two of them..."

Dylla Leon shook his head. "Third Brother, there's nothing to discuss. If Delia was willing to accept marrying one of the nobles of the imperial capital, then she would have done so many years earlier. As for now... it's best if you don't say anything. Later, I'll let my wife go speak with her."

There had been quite a few people who had raised this issue with Dylla Leon during this banquet.

This was because, clearly, Delia was young, beautiful, and talented, and was the disciple of a Grand Magus Saint. She also had the backing of the powerful Leon clan... such a perfect woman had countless suitors.

Delia sat there quietly in the corner.

"Little sister." A handsome young man, standing 1.8 meters tall with utterly

straight golden hair that fell to his shoulders, walked over to her.

Raising her head up, Delia revealed a smile on her face. “Big Brother.” The person who had come was Delia’s older sibling, Dixie. Just like back at the Ernst Institute, Dixie remained as cold and indifferent to others as ever. But towards his little sister, Dixie was filled with affection.

Dixie sat down opposite from Delia.

“What is it? You seem to be in a bad mood?” Dixie smiled as he spoke.

Delia shook her head resignedly. “Big Brother, you are always training by the side of the High Priest. You don’t know much about my affairs.”

“Does it have to do with Linley?” Dixie asked.

Delia laughed as she tossed him a glance. “Big Brother, you are quite clever. But both father and mother are somewhat opposed to me being together with him. I’ve been vexed about this... after all, I don’t want the relationship with the family to become too stiff.”

Dixie nodded. He understood how his sister felt. He had watched Delia grow up, and Dixie knew very well... that although Delia was a very determined, resolute girl, in the depths of her heart, she was somewhat mentally reliant on her family members.

“Most likely tonight, mother will come over and chat with me yet again about how promising this young man is, or how promising that young man is.” Delia laughed bitterly.

Every time she came back, her parents would always raise this issue with her.

Dixie frowned. “Those wastrel sons of those rich nobles still want to marry you? Linley has acted improperly as well. He should have openly come to the imperial capital and proposed to you long ago! If he did so, I would definitely support him.” In his heart, Dixie actually quite admired Linley.

After all, Linley was someone who was an even greater genius than he himself was.

“Propose to me?” Delia was startled, but then she burst into laughter.

Delia thought back to that night at the town of Wushan and how she had

kissed Linley. That look of utter shock and panic on Linley's face. Even despite her best subtle efforts, she wasn't able to get Linley to summon the courage to say that he loved her. How could he possibly come to the imperial capital to propose to her?"

"Big Brother, Linley is very different from how you imagine him." Delia laughed.

Delia was in a fairly good mood while her Big Brother was with her during the banquet. Unfortunately, after the banquet was over, she chatted with her parents for a time, and afterwards, her mood became terrible once again. Her parents tirelessly tried to persuade her.

She hated being pressured like this.

On the day of the Yulan Festival, Delia came to the headquarters of the Dawson Conglomerate in the Yulan Empire's imperial capital.

"Miss Delia." The supervisor here knew Delia by sight.

"I'd like to trouble you, sir, to help deliver this letter to Linley." Delia handed over a letter.

The supervisor immediately nodded. "Please don't worry. I will definitely make sure that this letter is delivered to Master Linley's hands." The Dawson Conglomerate was extremely efficient in carrying out any tasks related to Linley. The same day, they sent a flying magical beast out with the letter away from the imperial capital.

After the blizzard had ambushed them last night, this morning, when Linley left his room, he discovered that Mt. Blackraven was now covered with a layer of silver 'ornaments'. Some snow was drifting about on the surface of the lake. As the warm rays of the morning sun began to shine down from the east, the snow covering the trees and the boulders reflected the light dazzlingly.

"Whew." Taking a deep breath and sensing the fresh air after the blizzard, Linley allowed a smile to appear on his face.

Bebe appeared from within the wooden room as well. Rubbing the sleep from his little eyes, Bebe's four little paws left behind marks in the snow as he walked.

“Lord, Lord!” that loud voice rang out from afar, causing some of the snow on the trees to be shaken loose. Turning, Linley saw a huge figure rush towards him at high speed. With each step, the man moved over ten meters. With a mighty leap from the lake’s edge, the man flew over seventy or eighty meters before landing on the flat boulder in the center of the lake.

“Gates, why’d you run over here in such a rush?” Linley laughed.

Gates chortled. “To handle your affairs, of course. Otherwise, I wouldn’t rush over here so quickly.”

“My affairs?” Linley was clearly rather puzzled.

“Look, see!” Gates took out a letter from his clothes. “This is Miss Delia’s letter. The Dawson Conglomerate’s men just delivered it to Blackdirt City. Haha, those people from the Dawson Conglomerate have decided to just go ahead and set up a branch office in Blackdirt City.”

“Delia’s?”

Linley immediately accepted the letter. After opening it, he began to read it. At this time, Bebe growled towards Gates, “Gates, big guy, step aside. Don’t try to sneak any peeks at the letter between Delia and my Boss.”

“Got it, got it.” Gates didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry.

What Gates did know, however, was that he didn’t dare to offend this terrifying fellow, Bebe. Even the Saint-level magical beast Haeru admitted he was no match for Bebe. How would he, Gates, dare to offend him?

Linley was reading the letter very carefully.

“To the most esteemed Master Linley,

Greetings and happy reading!

You’ve been quite impressive lately. You’ve already taken over Blackdirt City... but Blackdirt City is just a small city. Given your status as the venerable Master Linley, I’m sure that you can’t possibly expect me to come over after you took over a single tiny city such as Blackdirt, can you? Wouldn’t that be rather embarrassing for you?

I’ve come to the decision that I must wait for you to, at the very least, found

your own duchy within the Anarchic Lands before heading over there. Otherwise... hrmph, I won't see you.

As for your questions regarding how my life is? My life isn't bad. I'm just quietly spending my time with my Teacher in training. My grandmother is doing much better now. There's no need for you to worry about my affairs. It's best if you spend your time worrying about the Anarchic Lands and your training.

Remember that I'm waiting for you to set up your duchy.

The day that your duchy is founded is the day I will leave the Yulan Empire. This is our appointment!

However... be careful. Don't exhaust yourself. I have all the time in the world, and I'll wait for you to found your duchy! I'll wait to see you!

Yours... Delia."

After reading this letter, Linley felt warmth in his heart, and he couldn't help but let a smile creep onto his face as he stored the letter into his interspatial ring. The nearby Gates couldn't help but mock, "Lord, you seem to be quite happy. Your face is about to split apart from that smile. What did Miss Delia write?"

"Yeah, Boss, what did she write?" Bebe was staring at Linley as well.

Linley chuckled, then looked at Gates. "Enough. Let me ask you something. When are you preparing to begin attacking the other cities?"

"We can start at any time. But right now, it is the Yulan Festival..." Gates said. The Yulan Festival was a festival that was celebrated throughout the entire Yulan continent. Even many soldiers would go back at this time to reunite with their families. Naturally, a portion of the soldiers would have to remain on duty to keep watch.

Linley shook his head. "Catching them by surprise will reduce our casualties."

"Then give the order, Lord." Gates' eyes were shining.

Linley nodded slightly. "Go back and make preparations immediately. Tomorrow morning, we'll begin our attacks against the neighboring cities. We must subdue the surrounding cities with the greatest haste... our current plan is

to take over an amount of land equal to a duchy in size.”

“Yes, Lord!” Gates said in a clear voice.

“Go, then.” Linley laughed calmly.

Gates immediately nodded, then left Mt. Blackraven. Blackdirt City, which had been in a state of preparation this entire time, began to frantically prepare to make its move after receiving Linley’s orders via Gates. And so, the hibernating Blackdirt City finally began to reach out towards the neighboring cities with its fierce claws.

Expanding Power

Yulan calendar, year 10010. January 5th. Night time. The world was covered with a dim gray gauze, and in some cooler places, the snow had yet to melt. Right now, the City of Tours was under tremendous pressure.

The city governor of Tours was up on his walls, staring outside in desperation. Outside the city, there was an indeterminate number of people who couldn't be seen very clearly.

"How many people does Blackdirt City have?" the city governor, Delai, shouted to his subordinates.

"Lord Governor, the scouts came to report to us as soon as they saw the enemy forces. They weren't able to clearly make out how many men they have. However, the leader of them seems to be one of those five legendary wargods that Blackdirt City possesses," a nearby subordinate reported back with some panic.

"One of the five wargods?" The city governor grew frantic. "Is he of the ninth rank just because he says he is? Hell, I can say that I'm a Saint! All of you, be careful. You must stand your ground."

"Yes, Lord Governor," those soldiers assented.

Tours City didn't dare to receive the attackers in a pitched battle on open ground. They could only stay inside the city and stand guard. After all, defense was always easier than offense.

The second brother, Ankh, stared coldly at the distant city. Blackdirt City had gone into full mobilization mode. Of the five major battalions, only one had stayed behind to guard the city, while the other four, under the leadership of Ankh, Hazer, Boone, and Gates went to attack the nearest four cities.

"Stop!" Ankh raised his right hand and shouted loudly.

Instantly, the 1800 soldiers came to a halt. Everyone stared worshipfully at the massive figure in front of them. All five of the Barker brothers were evenhanded in their treatment of the soldiers, rewarding and punishing as appropriate, and they spent much of their time with the soldiers as well.

When the soldiers trained, they also trained.

When the soldiers ran laps while carrying heavy weights, those five Barker brothers would train while carrying boulders weighing hundreds of thousands of pounds. The soldiers of Blackdirt City naturally grew to adore their leaders even more.

“Delai, listen up!” Ankh roared furiously.

That voice, brimming with Undying battle-qi, echoed in Tours City like thunder. The hearts of the soldiers of Tours City quailed. That huge voice alone caused their morale to drop dramatically. It seemed the legends were true. How could they possibly resist an expert like this?

The city governor, Delai, was growing frantic as well. But he didn’t want to give up his base.

“Say what you want to say. Don’t waste time.” Delai summoned his courage and shouted back, but although his voice was quite loud at the walls, by the time it reached Ankh, it had grown very soft, without any hint of threat.

Ankh continued shouting like a bullhorn. “Delai, if you offer Tours City to us, we can spare your life. Otherwise... my greataxe will show no mercy.” As Ankh spoke, many of the soldiers of Tours City began to have thoughts of betrayal.

In addition, long before Blackdirt City had launched its attack, many people in Tours City had secretly surrendered to Blackdirt City already.

“Oh, you want to fight to the end?” Ankh’s voice once more echoed in the ears of all the soldiers of Tours City.

“Kill!” A loud shout that shattered the heavens.

Many of the soldiers on the walls of Tours City were terrified by this shout. From below, they could hear countless warriors angrily screaming, “Kill!” “Kill!”



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All of them were charging wildly towards the walls of Tours City, their shields held high. Those ferocious, roaring knights created panic in the city guards.

“Archers! Shoot them! Shoot them dead!” the city governor, Delai, shouted angrily, his face red.

The archers on the city walls immediately nocked their bows, then began shooting arrows at the charging enemies. Most of the arrows in this first volley struck the shields. A few injured some of the soldiers of Blackdirt City. Three unlucky soldiers were shot to death.

“Shoot them all to death!” Delai roared angrily.

But before the second volley of arrows was loosed, Ankh charged forward, outpacing his men by over a hundred yards and rushing to the gates of the city. With a mighty howl, he brandished his terrifying greataxe and gave the city gates a thunderous chop.

“BANG!”

The entire city wall trembled, and the gates to Tours City instantly shattered into smithereens which flew everywhere. Even in his human form, Ankh was a warrior of the ninth rank. There was no difficulty at all for him to break past the defenses of these soldiers.

“The city gate is down!”

“That wargod is charging in!”

All sorts of shouts could be heard from within Tours City. Even the city governor, Delai, upon realizing that the gate had been breached, instantly turned pale.

“Whoosh!” With each wave of the greataxe, the surrounding soldiers were instantly blasted into countless pieces, sending blood and flesh everywhere. The nearby soldiers all began to retreat in terror. Ankh, covered by his Undying battle-qi, seemed a veritable devil.

Twirling his terrifying greataxe about, Ankh roared angrily, “Those who stand against me will die!”

Ankh brandished his greataxe about like a tornado, but this ‘tornado’ was a visible one. Anything touched by this ‘tornado’ was instantly blasted to bits. At first, some soldiers of Tours City had attempted to attack, but afterwards, no one dared to get near this fiend.

In but a few moments, the forces of Blackdirt City swept into the city through the gates.

“We surrender! We surrender!”

First, a single voice called out to surrender, but then, countless voices joined in. By the time Ankh and his bloody greataxe arrived at the city walls, the soldiers on the walls had all put down their weapons, while the city governor, Delai, was tied up in rope and placed on the floor. Several military officers were there, awaiting Ankh’s arrival.

“Milord, my name is Ford,” One of the military officers said respectfully.

“Oh, so you are Ford.”

Ankh knew very well that Ford was one of the military officers who had surrendered to them even before the battle had begun. Many had done so. Given that Blackdirt City had the five Barker brothers, how could they possibly lose?

Battles were fought by men and won by men.

When two forces were roughly on the same level of power, perhaps some stratagems and deceptions would be effective. But once the gap in power reached a sufficient level, such as now, where Ankh alone could demolish the forces of Tours City? A battle like this had no other possible outcomes at all. There wasn’t the slightest chance of defeat.

Yulan calendar, Year 10010. January 5th. Blackdirt City began its conquests.

By January 6th, Linley’s side already had five cities, and the number of people they controlled, including the various satellite towns and villages, was a grand total of nearly three million. Generally speaking, however, in the Anarchic

Lands, only an entity that was in control of a prefectural city would be considered to be a duchy.

Linley's side had five cities, but all of them were small cities, with only a few tens of thousands of people within the cities. But a prefectural city was capable of holding hundreds of thousands of citizens.

After these lightning-fast battles concluded, Linley's side temporarily stopped attacking. Instead, they quickly began to reorganize their armies. The original five battalions of Blackdirt City were now part of the 'First Legion', which was the core-most legion. The other four legions belonging to the other four cities all saw their military pay levels increased to roughly two thirds of the salary of the First Legion.

The taxes on the common people were lowered by over half across the board.

Each legion now had nine thousand people. In the Yulan continent, large legions could reach up to twenty thousand people. In the Anarchic Lands, however, since warfare was relatively scattered, Linley decided to lower the number of people per legion, forming five battalions into each legion.

The five legions quickly began to train together and organize internally.

The surrounding cities all sensed the threat, but they knew that Blackdirt City's forces were simply too powerful. While Blackdirt City's forces were still busy training and reorganizing, a nearby city voluntarily surrendered. The reason? The previous city governor had taken all of his enormous wealth and his guards and fled from that city.

Barker and Zassler both arrived at Mt. Blackraven. They stared up at the mountain.

"Barker," Zassler said suddenly.

Barker looked at Zassler. Zassler said, "Hazer has reached the ninth rank on the way to the Anarchic Lands. By now, all five of you brothers possess the power of a Saint. I will make my breakthrough in the next year or two as well. Think about it... with you five brothers making up the bulk of our military power, with me providing support, and of course, most important of all, with Linley and his two powerful magical beasts... with such an overpowering force,

we can erect our own kingdom, or perhaps even an empire!

“Mr. Zassler, what do you intend?” Barker’s eyes lit up.

Zassler said seriously, “Barker, right now, the continent has six major powers. Aside from the O’Brien Empire and the Yulan Empire, the other forces, namely, the Rohault Empire, Rhine Empire, Holy Union, and Dark Alliance, do not have a Deity amongst their ranks.”

Barker nodded his head in agreement.

“As for the Rohault Empire and the Rhine Empire, these two Empires don’t even have an expert on the same level as Haydson. But we not only have Linley, we also have Bebe.” Zassler was extremely confident. “The most important aspect of founding an empire is the strength of its highest-level experts. The more powerful its highest tier members are, the better of a chance one has.”

Barker was growing excited as well.

“Mr. Zassler, are you saying that we should build an empire together?” Barker looked at Zassler.

Zassler laughed. “That’s just one of the things I’ve been considering. Our current goal is destroying the Radiant Church’s influence in the Anarchic Lands. However, the Radiant Church currently occupies nearly a third of the territory of the Anarchic Lands. In order to eliminate them, we will need a great deal of land as well. After destroying them and taking over their territory... we would be in control of over half of the Anarchic Lands. At that time, we would then deal with the Cult of Shadows... and the Anarchic Lands would then be ours.”

Barker felt his heart rate speed up.

The Anarchic Lands was an area in constant turmoil and chaos. Although in size, it was smaller than the O’Brien Empire, it was still comparable to the Rhine Empire and the Rohault Empire.

“Erecting an empire...” Barker’s eyes were shining.

“Haha, no rush. One step at a time. Given our current power, with all of us working together, it shouldn’t be too hard for us to take over at least ten duchies in the Anarchic Lands and found a kingdom at the very least,” Zassler

said confidently.

Barker nodded repeatedly.

The Rohault Empire. The Rhine Empire. How many Saints did they have? The roots of these two Empires weren't nearly as deep as the roots of the O'Brien Empire and the Yulan Empire, nor did they have the assistance of Descended Angels like the Radiant Church or the Cult of Shadows.

For example, the Rohault Empire could at best produce just over ten Saints.

Linley's side had five Undying Warriors. Once Barker and his brothers reached the Saint level in human form, they would have the power of true Saint-level Undying Warriors. If the five of them worked together in concert with Linley and Bebe... a force like this wouldn't be afraid of the Radiant Church at all.

So why couldn't they found an Empire, then?

"Occupying the entire Anarchic Lands will be a bit difficult. After all, there are a lot of complicated aspects to this place." Zassler smiled. "But I still feel very confident." Zassler turned and stared up at Mt. Blackraven. Linley was there, in the mountain.

Zassler slowly said, "In my mind, I have a goal. One day, we will create a powerful empire, and Linley... he will be to our empire what the War God is to the O'Brien Empire."

"The War God?" Barker was very shocked.

Zassler smiled and nodded.

An enormous, mighty empire could only be founded with a cadre of fear-inducing top-tier experts. For example, in reality, the Rhine Empire and the Rohault Empire were both reliant on the Yulan Empire, precisely because they didn't have enough top-tier power.

But in the empire that Zassler dreamed of, the top-tier power was Linley.

Just like how the War God watched over the O'Brien Empire and the High Priest watched over the Yulan Empire... the future Linley would also watch over his future empire! But of course, Linley currently didn't yet have that much power.

“He’s only twenty-eight years old, but he’s already reached such a terrifying level. Can you imagine what someone like him will be able to accomplish in the future?” Zassler laughed as he glanced at Barker.

Barker nodded.

Barker and his brothers were truly awed by Linley’s prowess.

“Let’s go. Let’s go see Linley.” Zassler laughed.

Zassler, this old fox who had lived for over eight hundred years, now had a particular desire which excited him. He wanted to see the Yulan continent bring forth yet another Empire. How exciting that would be!

War Machine

“Rumble...”

Water rushed down from that tens of meters high waterfall, striking against the deep pool of water at the bottom, creating countless sprays of water. The water within this deep pool flowed out into a narrow creek, slowly winding its way downwards. Barker and Zassler followed this little creek deeper and deeper into Mt. Blackraven.

At the end of this creek was a peaceful lake. In the center of the lake, there was a gracefully built wooden cabin.

In front of the wooden cabin, there was a long-haired man wearing a loose robe who was wielding a violet longsword slowly. But in actuality, this ‘slowness’ was an illusion, a misperception of Zassler’s and Barker’s. Although it seemed slow, in truth, it was terrifyingly fast.

This sensation of a visual misperception made Barker and Zassler have the urge to vomit blood.

With each strike of the sword, it seemed as though the surrounding space itself was twisted.

Barker and Zassler glanced at each other, their eyes filled with shock. It had only been a few months, but Linley had made yet another breakthrough! They had never before seen Linley use this sword technique before. Just now, from what they had seen, they were certain... that this sword technique definitely was astonishingly powerful.

Barker and Zassler stood at the edges of the lake, quietly waiting.

After a long time, Linley sheathed his sword.

“Come over.” With a wave of Linley’s hands, a sudden gust of wind emerged, creating a ‘bridge of air’ between the wooden cabin and the lakeshore. “You

can just walk over. Don't be afraid. You won't fall."

Baker and Zassler glanced at each other, and then they stepped onto this 'bridge of air', walking to the center where Linley's wooden cabin was.

Linley sat down next to the stone bench. With a flip of his hand, he withdrew a flask of wine and three cups. Laughing calmly, he said, "Zassler, if you had come a few days ago, I probably would've only been able to use the wind to bring you over directly. I wouldn't have been able to do what I just did."

Zassler was an Arch Magus necromancer of the ninth rank. Although he was almost at the Saint-rank, he couldn't fly. And given his body's relative frailty, there was no way he could walk on water either.

"Lord, what was that, just now?" Barker had yet to recover from his shock.

Zassler looked at Linley as well. Laughing, Linley explained, "It is one way by which one can use the Laws of the Wind. Not too long ago, I gained some insights on the 'Slow' aspect, which allowed me to do what I just did. But I still am quite a ways off from the 'Spatial Lock' level."

"What is a 'Spatial Lock'?" Zassler questioned.

Linley didn't explain further. Zassler and Barker weren't practitioners of the Elemental Laws of the Wind. How could they possibly understand his explanations? When Linley had sparred against Miller, that expert from the mysterious mountain village, Linley had suddenly seen a clearer path to gaining a deeper understanding in the 'Slow' aspect of the wind. Naturally, that made training progress twice as fast for half the effort.

If Miller were to have seen Linley training, he would've been shocked.

In just a few short months, Linley had been able to advance this much. This sort of rate of improvement was simply terrifyingly fast.

Pouring cups of wine for each man, Linley raised his own winecup in a toast. Smiling, he said, "Just tell me why you have come."

Barker said, "Lord, after spending some time on the management of our current territory, we have completed our military reorganization, and given them three months of training. It is about time to attack a few other cities." As

soon as he heard these words, a smile crept onto Linley's face.

He had been eagerly awaiting this day.

"This time, we should be attacking that prefectural city, right?" Linley said.

The nearby Zassler nodded. "Right. According to my plans, this time, we should attack three small cities and the prefectural city of Moat." Linley's side currently had six cities and six legions with fifty thousand soldiers. This sort of military power was on par with that of a prefectural city.

However...

Linley's side had experts as well! This was a definite advantage.

"After we take down the prefectural city, we will be able to announce publicly that we have founded a duchy." Barker chortled.

Linley had been eagerly awaiting the founding of the duchy. He still remembered Delia's appointment with him in that letter. The day he founded his own duchy was the day on which Delia would leave the Yulan Empire to come looking for him.

"Linley," Zassler asked, "After we take down the prefectural city, what should we do next? Should we continue taking over cities that belong to neither the Radiant Church nor the Cult of Shadows? Or should we begin to launch attacks against the cities which the Radiant Church controls?"

Per their battle maps, after taking down the prefectural city, to the south of the territory that Linley controlled was the territory under the dominion of the Radiant Church.

Of course, the Radiant Church's control was in secret. On the surface, they were all duchies. But in truth, it was quite easy to tell which were controlled by the Radiant Church and which were controlled by the Cult of Shadows! The way to do so was to simply look at the temples in those prefectural cities. If the city had a Radiant Temple, then that duchy was secretly controlled by the Radiant Church.

If it had a Shadow Temple, then it was controlled by the Cult of Shadows.

"Begin attacking the duchies controlled by the Radiant Church." Linley's eyes

narrowed as he made his decision. “As our activities grow more and more pronounced, the intelligence network of the Radiant Church would definitely take note of the five Barker brothers. Knowing that you are here, it would be strange if they didn’t realize that I, Linley, was here as well.”

Linley looked at Barker and Zassler, then chuckled. “After we take down the prefectural city, we’ll spend some time stabilizing it and do a wholesale reorganization of our armies. After reorganizing our armies, then we will begin attacking the territory controlled by the Radiant Church!”

“But of course, let’s only launch some small attacks at first, and see how the Radiant Church responds.” Linley laughed calmly. “Let’s see if they immediately counterattack, or if they refrain from doing so, or if they send over experts to find me.”

Zassler understood Linley’s intentions. Laughing, he said, “Right. If the Radiant Church decides to openly fight you, Linley, then... the name of the duchy will be based off of your family name. Let us call it the ‘Baruch Duchy’!”

“But if the Radiant Church refrains, then we can continue to pretend you are not here, and we can just choose a name for the duchy at random.”

Hearing Zassler’s words, Linley nodded in approval.

Right now, what they needed to see was how the Radiant Church would react. If the experts of the Radiant Church did not appear, then Linley wouldn’t act. He would let Barker and his brothers stir up trouble, repeatedly attacking cities. If enemy experts appeared... then they would respond in this manner.

“When will we attack the City of Moat?” Barker looked at Linley.

“Hurry up and start,” Linley replied.

Linley’s words caused all six cities to begin gearing up for war. One legion with nine thousand men, led by Boone, Ankh, and Hazer, went to attack three smaller cities, while the other four legions, under the leadership of Gates and Barker, went to attack the prefectural city of Moat.

Zassler watched over Blackdirt City.

“Kill!” The grounds beneath the walls of the prefectural city of Moat were

totally red with blood. At first, the prefectural city of Moat had sent their army of twenty thousand out, preparing to directly battle against the enemy. But when the troops led by Gates and Barker had charged into them, massive casualties had resulted.

Gates and Barker were two terrible gods of battle.

Wherever those massive greataxes whirled about, people died in vast numbers. Each army had its own elite squads, and Gates and Barker focused precisely on those people. Wherever there was a tough pocket of resistance, they went to snuff it out.

Quickly, the twenty-thousand-man army of the prefectural city of Moat was utterly shattered. Their morale totally gone, many people immediately surrendered, then and there.

More than half had died. The lucky survivors... were all captured.

They couldn't flee even if they wanted to. The city gates to the prefectural city of Moat were firmly shut. The city governor of the prefectural city of Moat simply didn't dare to open the gates. Once he did, those two fiends would charge inside and he would definitely die. Right now, the prefectural city of Moat only had twenty thousand soldiers.

The soldiers of Blackdirt City were arranged in neat, orderly rows. Those ten thousand prisoners were utterly demoralized, with many wounded. Only two or three thousand were in battle-shape. Blood covered the ground, and the morale of the city guards of the prefectural city of Moat was at rock bottom.

"What is going on? Why are they standing so far away?" The garrison troops were growing frantic. The range the enemy was at was far beyond bow range.

Suddenly, those two godlike leaders suddenly charged forward at high speed, greataxes in hand. Their speed was so fast that everyone gaped as they watched. The garrison troops immediately shouted out, "Archers, prepare to attack those two men. Fire!"

The hundred elite archers selected from within the ordinary ranged division were all equipped with powerful bows, which they began to use to fire down upon the two men. However, Barker and Gates were simply too fast. Only a few

arrows hit them, but even the ones that hit them were deflected off.

“Haha, watch this!” Gates roared in excitement. Raising his heart-stoppingly terrifying greataxe, he chopped down in the direction of that distant city gate.

“Bam!”

A sudden, terrifying sound rang out from the city gates. The tall, strong city gates shuddered and then began to crack, but it didn’t actually break.

“The gates of a prefectural city are far sturdier than those of smaller cities.” Gates laughed loudly, the sound of his laughter shaking the heavens. The soldiers on the walls of Moat could hear it clearly. “Big Brother, no need for you to get involved, I can deal with that gate.”

That powerful blast of force from afar had already caused the soldiers on the wall to turn pale-faced.

Who fought battles like this?!

Smashing straight through the front gates and charging in?!

“Drop the boulders, quick, drop the boulders!” the shrill voice of the city governor rang out. The walls of this prefectural city were over ten meters thick. Aside from the normally closed city gates, there were actually a few other apertures. From those apertures, massive boulders began to fall down.

Those ten plus thick, heavy boulders crashed down with enough power that not even a warrior of the ninth rank could disregard them. These were used especially for dealing with experts.

“Dropping boulders?”

Gates’ face changed, and he howled angrily, “Motherfucker, out of my way!” That greataxe moved as agilely as a leaf, gently touching the city gate. The gate shuddered violently, and then half of it broke apart and crumbled. But with a low rumbling sound, those boulders began to fall down, blocking off the city entrance.

“Break.” Barker also used the same technique, ‘wielding something heavy as though it were light’.

“Boom!” The boulder shuddered, and pieces of rock were sent flying

everywhere. Over a one-meter-deep crack appeared on the surface of the boulder, but compared to its terrifyingly massive size, even a deep crack meant little to it.

Gates and Barker glanced at each other.

“We’ll have to act per his Lordship’s orders.” Gates laughed.

As Linley had directed, Barker and his brothers were to keep their identity as Undying Warriors a secret. They were one of Linley’s hidden weapons. After all, the Radiant Church didn’t know their identity for certain. The only thing they could reveal was what the Radiant Church already knew.

“Haeru!” Barker let out a loud roar.

“Groooooowl!” An earth-shaking roar could be heard, and that terrifying black panther that had been in the middle of the army suddenly grew dramatically larger, reaching a height of ten meters and a length of twenty. Seeing this enormous, three-story-tall magical beast... all of the people in the prefectural city of Moat were utterly stunned.

“A Saint-level magical beast!”

Those guards were speechless.

“Bang!” The three-story-tall Haeru transformed into a black blur, charging at the city gates. In the blink of an eye, he traversed the thousand meters of distance to the city gates. The city gates were twenty meters high, but Haeru’s terrifying body slammed directly against that ten-meter-thick boulder.

A terrifying explosion could be heard.

That boulder split apart as though it were made of tofu, exploding into countless pieces that went flying every which way. Many of the garrison soldiers in the city were struck by the flying stones and had their heads broken open or their chests caved in... and that was just the appetizer.

The terrifying magical beast, Haeru, charged through and began to kill.

He was an absolute war machine. Anything standing before him would be trampled to death or knocked flying. Countless casualties!

“Surrender! We surrender!”

“Surrender!!!”

Even the sturdiest of warriors, when faced with such a terrifying magical beast, would feel powerless. All of them immediately threw down their weapons and knelt, signifying surrender. A Saint-level magical beast... how could soldiers like them possibly resist against such an overpowering force?

“Surrender. I surrender.” The city governor of the prefectural city of Moat fell to his knees, his entire body shaking.

After taking over the prefectural city of Moat, Linley’s side now had a prefectural city and nine smaller cities, and now controlled a population of nine million. They could already be considered a relatively large duchy in size.

Heading Out

Late night. Within a quiet study, there was a desk with a lit lamp atop it, flickering with dim light.

Atop the table, there was a hawk-nosed, skinny man with long violet hair. This man was flipping through a thick book. Under the dim light of the lamp, the hawk-nosed man's appearance couldn't be clearly made out. But just at this moment... "Knock, knock, knock." The sound of knocking.

"Enter." The hawk-nosed man didn't even look up, continuing to leaf through the book.

"Creaaaak." The door swung open, and a handsome-looking golden-haired middle-aged man walked in. As soon as he walked in, he shut the door, then bowed respectfully. "Lord Praetor, Linley's forces have already taken the prefectural city of Moat."

The hawk-nosed man was the awe-inspiring Praetor of the Ecclesiastical Tribunal of the Radiant Church, Osenno.

Publicly, the Holy Emperor was the leader of the Radiant Church. The church did, however, whitewash its actions to make itself look pure. When dealing with some experts, they had the Ecclesiastical Tribunal carry out missions with extreme ruthlessness. Their leader, the Praetor, within the Radiant Church itself, had power and authority not one whit lower than the Holy Emperor's.

"Oh." Osenno continued to read his book.

The golden-haired man said respectfully, "Taking over the prefectural city of Moat is a small affair. More importantly... Linley's side used that mysterious Saint-level panther-type magical beast in order to break through the city walls!"

"They used the Saint-level beast?" Osenno's head suddenly snapped up.

Osenno's eyes were as deep and dark as the depths of the sea. The golden-

haired man felt his heart shake from Osenno's gaze, but he forced down his fear and said, "Lord Praetor, Linley's side actually used Saints to do battle. This is a clear provocation."

Generally speaking, Saints did not get involved in battles.

Once a Saint got involved, that meant that there was no leeway left, nor any chance of reconciliation. It would be a fight to the death.

As the prefectural city of Moat was not part of the Radiant Church's territory, for Linley to act in such a way wasn't a direct provocation towards the Radiant Church. But for him to have Saint-level magical beasts engage in battle... this was a gesture. A provoking gesture towards the Radiant Church. Linley's intentions were quite clear...

My magical beast has already shown himself. These forces belong to me, Linley. So what is your Radiant Church going to do about it?

At the same time, Linley's side was displaying their might. 'Since I dare to send out my Saint-level magical beast to do battle, if your Radiant Church wishes to battle me, you'd best bring your Saints along as well. Don't bother with the soldiers.'

"Lord Praetor?" The golden-haired man looked at Osenno.

Osenno's deep, dark eyes were totally unreadable. Suddenly, Osenno spoke. "Remember. From today forward, don't fight head on against Linley. We will endure!" The golden-haired man was shocked, and he stared at Osenno in disbelief.

Osenno was definitely an extremely, terrifyingly, powerful expert.

As one of the towering figures of the Radiant Church, his power was no lower than Haydson's, and probably higher. The Radiant Church had quite a few Saints in the Anarchic Lands as well. There was no need for them to fear Linley.

"Lord Praetor, Linley's side only includes himself and those two magical beasts," the golden-haired man said uncomprehendingly.

Osenno said calmly, "No. He doesn't only have so few Saints. Those five Barker brothers, if our predictions are correct, should be the descendants of

Armand. They are all warriors of the ninth rank now. Upon transforming, they would be early-stage Saints. Only experts on the level of mid-stage Saints would be able to beat them.”

“Undying Warriors?” The golden-haired man was shocked.

Osenno glanced at him.

When Cesar had rescued Barker and his brothers and threatened Stehle, the Holy Emperor Heidens had immediately suspected that the Barker brothers were of the Armand clan. After all, for Cesar to act in such a way and so strongly... there was no other explanation.

“They aren’t much weaker than us.” Osenno lowered his head to his book again. He said a few final, calm words. “Remember. Endure.”

“Then what if Linley erects a duchy and begins attacking our territory?” the golden-haired man asked. Although he was the managing supervisor for the Radiant Church’s forces in the Anarchic Lands, now that Osenno was here, naturally Osenno was now in charge.

Osenno said calmly, “If they attack our territory, we retreat and let them take it.”

“Uh...” The golden-haired man stared at Osenno in shock.

Osenno said calmly, “If they provoke us, we will endure. If they attack our territory, we will retreat! Let Linley think that we fear them and that our power is less than theirs... however, understand this: when he takes over our territory, he will naturally reorganize and make use of the soldiers of those cities.”

“Ah!” The golden-haired man’s eyes lit up. He understood Osenno’s hidden meaning.

“The Lord Praetor is wise,” the golden-haired man said excitedly.

Osenno chuckled calmly. “This is how warfare has always been. Human resources are of the highest importance! In terms of ensuring loyalty, what can be more powerful than faith? Linley... I’ll let you know how terrifyingly powerful ‘faith’ can be.”

The golden-haired man was secretly shaken.

Osenno was simply too sinister.

They possessed great power and many experts, but they still used such sinister methods. The golden-haired man could fully visualize... how the cocky, overconfident Linley's forces would suddenly be beaten back to the starting point.

"You can leave now." Osenno lowered his head to his book as he spoke calmly.

"Yes, Lord Praetor."

The golden-haired man left respectfully, leaving behind Osenno by himself in that dimly-lit study. He quietly continued to read that book. Next to it, there was another scroll, which had a few words written atop it; 'Linley Baruch.'



*

In the northern area of the Anarchic Lands. In one breath, they had taken over a prefectural city and nine small cities, erecting a dominion which controlled nine million citizens. But although they had taken over the prefectural city of Moat, the political center of Linley's side was still in Blackdirt City.

The current Blackdirt City was extremely developed.

The policy of no taxation caused many people to desire to migrate to Blackdirt City, and caused Blackdirt City to be bursting from the seams. This had resulted in the population management department of Blackdirt City to raise the immigration requirements. But as the political center of this dominion, Blackdirt City continued to attract many migrants.

"Boss, Blackdirt City has changed so much." Standing on Linley's shoulders, Bebe accompanied Linley as he walked along one of the primary roads.

Linley also stared at the surrounding hotels, clothing stores, and weaponry stores on each side of the road. When Linley had first arrived at Blackdirt City, the local citizens were dressed in rags and most looked yellow and malnourished. But in recent months, Blackdirt City had completely changed.

Those tattered old stores had all been completely renovated.

The streets had been repaved as well, and there were trees on each side of the road. In some of the hotels, Linley saw many commoners drinking wine while casually chatting. Most of them were talking about their 'five wargods'.

Under the leadership of these five virtually invincible wargods, their lives had become stable, and the null taxation rate had caused their quality of life to improve by several levels.

"If those five wargods were to be defeated..." Just as a person in the hotel spoke these words...

"Motherfucker, what are you farting about?"

"Those wargods are invincible. How can they be defeated? Punk, you better watch your mouth."

Many people instantly began to curse him angrily. These commoners all deeply enjoyed their current peaceful, stable lives. Naturally, they didn't wish for their lives to be disrupted.

"In the O'Brien Empire and the Holy Union, peaceful lives are so easily found, but in the Anarchic Lands, they are so precious and valuable." Linley was suddenly moved. "This is what constant chaos causes."

"If one day, the Anarchic Lands could be unified and the chaos brought to an end..."

Looking at the smiles on the faces of the commoners, Linley suddenly realized that his heart had a happy, satisfied feeling.

"Unification?" Linley shook his head and laughed.

He didn't aspire to this. To be able to make his loved ones happy and to allow himself to constantly improve in his training. This would make him very satisfied.

"It's best to allow Zassler and Barker to continue handling the affairs of war." Linley's body suddenly flickered and disappeared with a light wind.

Within the city governor's mansion in Blackdirt City, Jenne, Rebecca, Leena, and the others were eating lunch in the living room. Suddenly, Linley appeared

in front of the door...

“Lord.” Barker immediately stood up, and the others did as well. Linley hurriedly said, “Sit, everyone. I’m just here to visit you and talk about a few things.” Linley smiled as he walked to a nearby chair and sat down.

Zassler immediately said, “Linley, we were planning to go find you and discuss recent developments with you. Now that you are here, Jenne... make your report to Linley.” Currently, Jenne was the highest-level administrator of their dominion.

But just as Jenne opened her mouth and was about to begin, Linley chuckled as he reached out to stop her. “Jenne, sit. No rush.”

Jenne nodded and sat down.

“As far as the wars are concerned, you can make up your minds on your own. Right now, I am thinking... there is still a period of time before we begin to do battle against the Radiant Church. I want to take this opportunity to make a trip to the south and spar with a few Saints.”

Linley still remembered the invitation from that Miller.

Sparring with experts, especially experts who trained in the same Elemental Laws, would give him many insights. In addition, his forces would soon do battle against the Radiant Church. By the time the battles started, he wouldn’t dare to casually leave.

He had to seize the time he had.

“Lord, don’t worry.” Barker laughed. “However, in another seven or eight days, we will begin attacking the duchies controlled by the Radiant Church. Given what we discussed with you last time, Lord, if the Radiant Church fights us head on, we won’t cower from them, and a month from now, we will found our duchy as the Baruch Duchy. If they are afraid of us, we can continue to pretend as we attack them, and pick another name for the duchy.”

Linley nodded.

“Very well, then. Haeru will stay with you, in case of any emergency. Bebe and I will head out.” Linley immediately stood up.

“Big Brother Linley, won’t you have a meal with us?” Jenne suddenly said.

Linley chuckled towards Jenne, then shook his head. “No.” Linley’s body flickered, then disappeared from within the living room. Jenne, somewhat disappointed, let out a soft sigh.



*

In the southern areas of the Anarchic Lands. Within that quiet, mysterious little village.

Ever since the news of Reynolds choosing to stay here in the village had spread out, Reynolds had been ostracized within the village! The reason? Monica! Monica was the most beautiful, eye-catching girl in this village. There were simply too many suitors pursuing her.

Originally, many youngsters had thought that Reynolds would definitely leave and thus not be a threat.

But in the end, Reynolds had stayed.

Within a hotel in the mountain village. Reynolds was sitting there drinking wine.

“Hey, punk, move over.” Three youngsters walked over and slapped his table hard as they barked viciously at Reynolds.

Reynolds lifted his head up and glanced at them.

“What, you got a problem?” Those three youngsters’ bodies began to faintly glow with battle-qi. A magus of the seventh rank didn’t count for much in this mysterious mountain village. There were dozens of youths here who had reached the seventh rank, and quite a few who had reached the eighth. The three youngsters in front of him? One was a warrior of the seventh rank. The stronger one was of the eighth rank.

There was nothing he would be able to do if they wanted to beat him.

Taking a deep breath, Reynolds held down his temper and moved aside. There was nothing he could do... he had no one to rely on here in this village.

But many of the uncles, aunts, grandparents and what not of the youngsters here were all experts. How could he possibly fight against them? And many of the youths here had grown up together. If they banded together, how could he possibly fight them all?

“What are you doing?”

Monica and her serving maid came over, and she snapped angrily at them.

“Princess Monica.” Those three youngsters immediately bowed. Within this mysterious mountain village, Monica’s father’s status was extremely high. According to legend... this mysterious mountain village had already existed a thousand years ago, and at that time, Monica’s father had looked exactly the way he looked right now.

Monica stared angrily at each of them, then grabbed Reynolds by the hand. “Big Brother Reynolds, let’s go.”

Reynolds stood up. Taking a deep breath, he left alongside Monica.

“All he can do is hide behind a woman. Useless creature,” those three youths cursed him in whispers. Reynolds, who had left alongside Monica, naturally could hear their voices. His body just trembled slightly, and then he followed Monica away.

In this mysterious mountain village, he had no one to rely on. All he could do was endure it!

Third Bro?

Within a grassy area near the mountain village.

Monica had her serving girl go back, and then held hands with Reynolds as they walked together.

“Big Brother Reynolds, those people go way too far. This isn’t the first time either. I’m going to tell Uncle Miller and have Uncle Miller teach them a lesson.” Monica was so angry that her face was a bit red. Looking at Monica, Reynolds only smiled. “Monica, it’s fine. Don’t tell your Uncle Miller.”

“But Big Brother Reynolds, they...” Monica said frantically,

Reynolds shook his head. “These people are only angry that you are always with me. They are jealous of me, get it?”

Monica’s face instantly turned red.

Seeing the embarrassed look on Monica’s face, Reynolds quickly felt that the little bit of unhappiness he had just experienced was nothing. “Monica, for you, I chose to stay in the mountain village. I knew these things would happen. Monica... don’t worry. I’m still weak. When I grow stronger, they won’t dare to do these things any longer.”

“But that will take a long time.” Monica frowned.

Reynolds said confidently, “Trust in your Big Brother Reynolds. I’ll be fine.”

Monica nodded obediently.

It must be said that Reynolds was extremely skilled in chasing girls. Despite having only known him for a few months, Monica had very early on fallen for this experienced, humorous, and attentive man, Reynolds.

Holding hands, the two quietly walked on the grass.

“If we can always be like this and walk together into eternity, how wonderful

would that be?" Monica leaned against Reynolds.

Reynolds gently said, "Monica, let's get married."

"AH!"

Monica jerked her head up as though she had been hit by lightning. Utterly stunned, her face turned pure scarlet. Reynolds laughed and lowered his head to look at her. "What, Monica? Are you unwilling?"

Monica stuttered for a few moments, then said with a frown, "My mother wouldn't agree."

"Why wouldn't your mother agree?" Reynolds asked.

Monica shook her head. "My mother has very strict requirements. She originally said that only a person at the Saint level could marry me. After my father coaxed and cajoled her, she still said... that my husband had to at least be of the ninth rank. My mother looks down upon the weak."

Reynolds was stunned.

"How could your mother..." Reynolds didn't know what to say.

Monica lowered her voice to a whisper. "Big Brother Reynolds, my mother is very cold. Only in front of me does she occasionally smile. Usually... even Uncle Miller is terrified of her."

Reynolds was shocked. Reynolds had a faint idea as to how powerful Miller was. His terrifying speed was something that most likely warriors of the ninth rank would find difficult or impossible to reach. In other words... this Uncle Miller was at least of the ninth rank, or perhaps a Saint.

The two chatted on the grass for a long time.

"Alright, it's getting late." Monica looked upwards at the sky. "I need to go back and eat dinner. If I get home late, mother will reprimand me again." Reynolds nodded slightly, watching Monica as she left.

Monica's residence was one of the restricted areas in the mysterious village. Aside from a few people like Miller who were granted entry, most of the dwellers of the village were not permitted to go near it. Naturally... Reynolds couldn't go there either, and he hadn't met Monica's parents.

Shortly after Monica had left.

“Reynolds, you seem to be enjoying yourself.” Five youths walked over. Their leader had long golden hair, like that of a lion, and a handsome, rugged face. Seeing these people, Reynolds knew that today was not going to be a good day.

The name of this youngster was Videle. He was one of the leaders of the younger generation. Despite only being forty, he was a warrior of the eighth rank.

To those powerful warriors and magi, their lifespan was usually quite long, at least three or four centuries. Forty was quite young.

“Reynolds, I already warned you last time to stop bothering Monica.” Videle stared coldly at Reynolds. “A man should know his limits. Punk, how can you be worthy of Monica? Monica’s parents are both Saints. And what are you?”

Reynolds was startled. He knew that Monica’s father was a Saint, but this was the first time he had heard that Monica’s mother was a Saint as well.

“Big Brother Videle’s father is a Saint as well. Him and Monica are a good match. You outsider punk, what type of thing are you?” The other youngsters were cursing Reynolds as well. These youngsters simply couldn’t stand to watch an outsider take away ‘their’ princess.

“Brothers, help this punk learn his lesson,” Videle said coldly.

The four nearby youths immediately charged forward together, while Reynolds continuously retreated... and then immediately turned and began running towards the village. But he was a magus; how could he compete against warriors in speed? In a few short moments, he was caught up to.

Instantly, punches and kicks began to land all over his body. His face, however, wasn’t injured at all. These people were quite clever, reserving their attacks for Reynolds’ body. But the rules of the village were strict; the villagers were not to engage in mutual slaughter. Fighting was fine, but if someone was killed, those youths would have been in for it.

This was the reason why Reynolds had endured.

He knew that these people wouldn’t dare to kill him.



*

“Creaaak.” Reynolds opened his door. At this time, a burly neighbor of his laughed, “Reynolds, you are back? Hrm? What’s wrong? You seem to have some trouble walking. Did those punks beat you up again?”

Reynolds forced out a smile. “Big Brother Field, I’m fine.”

In the village, there were still some people who were very kind to Reynolds. These were mostly the older crowd. Because Reynolds had a good character, many people liked Reynolds. Field was one of those who cared about Reynolds the most.

“Reynolds, in the future, don’t go out so much. Maybe you can help out at my weapon shop. As long as you are with me, I’d like to see who’d dare try and abuse you,” Field said repeatedly.

“Thank you.” Reynolds forced out a smile as he entered his room.

In his quiet room, Reynolds sat down cross legged, thinking to himself, “Those bastards! But in this village, I am an outsider, after all. All I can do is to endure. One day... when my power increases, I won’t be afraid of them again.”

His life in this village was very tough.

But Reynolds had never thought about abandoning it. Each time he was humiliated, Reynolds would think about Monica. This was the only reason why he had been able to endure.

“Boss... Second Bro... Third Bro... who knows when I’ll be able to meet you again?” Reynolds couldn’t help but think of his dear friends. And then, he closed his eyes and began to meditate. In the past, he had never trained so hard before, but he knew that the only way he would be allowed to leave the village was if he reached the top ten in the annual tournament.



*

The sky was clear and blue. Linley flew agilely through the skies, with Bebe by his side. Beneath them was the boundless earth and cities which seemed the size of a fist. They had left at noon. Just by using the Windshadow spell, by the afternoon, Linley had arrived at the southern part of the Anarchic Lands.

Linley was able to easily find that large mountain around a hundred kilometers south of Southmount City.

“This little mountain village really is mysterious.” Flying into the air above the mountain valley, Linley stared down at the quiet little village below. Linley instructed Bebe, “Bebe, don’t use your spiritual energy to scan them. Let’s just go down.”

Bebe snickered, “Boss, I got it. It is very impolite to use spiritual energy to scan other Saints, right?”

Linley nodded slightly.

It was actually not a big deal if a powerful Saint used his spiritual energy to scan a weak Saint, but Linley had interacted with Miller before. According to Miller... there were multiple Saints within this mysterious village, and in particular, they had that ‘Lord’ amongst them.

Someone whom even Miller would refer to as ‘Lord’ was definitely someone much more powerful than Linley.

In a place such as this, it was better to be a bit humble.

Before Linley even had a chance to fly down, suddenly, a human figure streaked into the air at high speed. It was Miller. Miller’s face was all smiles. “Haha, brother Linley. You came. This is wonderful. As soon as I got back, I began to wonder to myself when you would come, brother Linley.”

“Miller, you really are powerful. As soon as I came, you noticed me,” Linley said with surprise.

Neither he nor Bebe had utilized their spiritual energy, and yet they had been discovered so quickly. This was indeed terrifying. Miller laughed self-mockingly. “Linley, I am not as formidable as that. When you arrived, his Lordship discovered you and spoke to me mentally to inform me.”

“Spoke to you mentally?” Linley stared at Miller in surprise.

They weren’t master and magical beast companion. How could they mentally communicate? At most, Saints would be able to reach the level of using spiritual energy to broadcast their location or to scan people. There was no way one could use spiritual energy to communicate.

“You and I aren’t capable of it, but that doesn’t mean his Lordship isn’t capable of it.” Miller laughed.

Linley became even more curious about this mysterious expert.

Suddenly, another human figure flew towards them at high speed. It was someone with fiery red hair and a dominating aura that made even Linley feel surprised. This person should be extremely powerful.

“Miller, is this the genius, ‘Linley’, that you mentioned?” The red-haired man stared at Linley, as though staring at some sort of rare specimen.

Miller immediately made the introductions. “Linley, this is my good friend, Livingston. He trains in the Elemental Laws of Fire, and is on par with me in power.” The nearby red-haired man hurriedly said, “What do you mean, on par with you? Miller... when you fight with me, you always dodge here and dodge there. If you are so tough, take me head on!”

Linley began to laugh.

“That’s Livingston for you.” Miller laughed as well.

Livingston glanced at him, then laughed towards Linley. “Linley, although I rarely leave the village, I’ve heard of you long ago. You are only twenty-seven... oh, twenty-eight years old now, right?”

Linley nodded.

“I am so ashamed I could die. I’m over a thousand years old,” Livingston said with a self-mocking laugh.

“Useless. So useless,” Bebe’s voice rang out.

Livingston and Miller stared at the little tiny ‘Bebe’ on Linley’s shoulders. When they did, Miller’s face suddenly changed and he said with surprise, “Linley, is this Saint-level magical beast the one that defeated Haydson?”

“Twas indeed I, Bebe!” Bebe arrogantly raised his little head up high.

Miller laughed and nodded, then said to Linley, “You’ve come at just the right time. Today, we are holding our annual village tournament. Livingston and I are responsible for organizing it. In a while, the tournament will begin. Linley, come take a look with us.”

“A village tournament?” Linley grew interested.

Linley, Livingston, and Miller all flew downwards, while Miller introduced some of the details about the village tournament. Hearing more and more, Linley was quite astonished. This mountain village really was quite strict, for them to make it so hard for someone to leave the village.

In the empty area east of the mountain village, virtually all of the villagers had assembled. Thousands of people were there, filling the tournament grounds to the brim.

Within the village, this annual competition was one of the biggest events of the year. Because so many people participated, each tournament would take a great deal of time. Generally speaking... Saints would be the officiators for the first day’s competition.

“Lord Miller and Lord Livingston have arrived.”

Those thousands of people stared at the sky as those two human figures flew over at high speed. They instantly recognized Livingston and Miller. Although the mountain village had many experts and quite a few experts of the ninth rank, producing a Saint was extremely difficult. Centuries might pass without a single new Saint appearing. Thus, all of the people in the village were very much in awe of Miller and Livingston.

“Hey, who is that lord who is flying alongside Lord Miller and Lord Livingston?” Many villagers were puzzled.

Reynolds, standing in the middle of the crowd, just stood there, stunned as he stared at that familiar figure. That person chatting and laughing with Miller and Livingston... “Third, Third Bro?” Reynolds’ eyes were filled with disbelief.

But Linley was busy chatting with Miller and Livingston. How could he possibly notice that in this crowd of thousands, Reynolds was present?

Desri

Virtually all of the villagers in this secretive little village in the southern part of the Anarchic Lands were clustered here, staring at Miller, Livingston, and Linley as they flew over. Those thousands of people instantly grew excited and began to chant the names of those two Saints.

“Miller!” “Miller!” “Miller!” “Miller!”

“Livingston!” “Livingston!” “Livingston!” “Livingston!”

A wave of cheers echoed forth from the valley. The atmosphere here was extremely lively and energetic. Miller, Livingston, and Linley flew to the center. Miller just extended his hand and waved, and everyone in the area fell silent.

Everyone stared at those three people in the center, and many also noticed the cute little Shadowmouse on Linley’s shoulders.

A smile appeared on Miller’s face. “This year will be the same as the past. We are about to begin our annual tournament. However, there is one difference this year. First of all, there is a total of 1022 participants in this year’s tournament, which is much higher than in the past. And secondly... this year, Master Linley, renowned throughout the Yulan continent, has come!”

Master Linley?

Upon hearing this name, the thousands of villagers all fell silent, turning their gazes towards Linley... and then, the entire village exploded into explosive cheers of welcome. Everyone felt extremely excited that such a legendary genius Saint had arrived.

“Excuse me. Excuse me.” Reynolds constantly squeezed forward.

But there were too many people. Reynolds, having always been low-key, had originally been at the margins of the crowd, but now, he was squeezing forwards.

“Why are you squeezing forward?” An unhappy shout.

Reynolds turned his head and saw that it was Videle, the youth who had a grudge against him. Right now, the area was filled with thunderous cheers, but Videle stared coldly at Reynolds and whispered, “What, you want to take a look at Master Linley? Haha... what a joke!”

But Reynolds paid Videle no heed, passing by more people as he continued to squeeze forward.

“Everyone, silence.” Miller reached his hand out and waved, and the villagers began to fall silent. But just as Miller was about to speak, a voice rang out from within the crowd, “Third Bro!”

Linley had been engaged in quiet chatter and laughter with Livingston, but suddenly, his face stiffened. Seeing the change in Linley’s expression, Livingston couldn’t help but feel startled. He whispered, “Linley?” But it seemed as though Linley didn’t even hear him, as he slowly turned his head towards the direction of that noise.

That familiar figure in the crowd...

“Third Bro...” Reynolds was so excited that his entire body was shaking.

“Fourth Bro!” Linley was filled with joy and excitement. Paying no heed to what Miller and Livingston were saying, Linley’s body turned into a blur as he rushed towards Reynolds, who had already squeezed his way in. The two bros immediately embraced each other in a hug.

A very tight hug!

After learning the truth behind how Reynolds had ‘died’, Linley had been filled with utter rage, and in that rage, slaughtered Prince Julin. When Linley had learned that it was Hugh who had killed Reynolds, Linley had planned to kill Hugh right there in the military camp to avenge his bro.

But afterwards, Hugh claimed that Reynolds didn’t die. Only then had Linley forbore from killing him.

Linley was no soldier. In his heart, he didn’t care about noble ranks or military matters. According to noble privileges, as the saying went, ‘If the monarch

ordered his officials to die, his officials had no choice but to die.’ Prince Julin, in his fear of death, had let Reynolds ‘die’ pointlessly. He could do this because according to noble privileges, the rights of the lord were far greater than that of the subject.

But to Linley?

Bullshit!

Even the Emperor wasn’t as important as his bros. What was the big deal about an Emperor? He was born to the royal clan and inherited the Imperial throne. What, did that mean he was necessarily more noble than Linley’s bros? That was nothing more than the brainwashing foolish commoners believed in. Linley didn’t care about those at all.

“Reynolds and Master Linley... but...” Everyone was stunned.

In particular, Videle. That ‘pretty-boy’ Reynolds was tightly embracing Linley? What was the relationship between them?

Linley and Reynolds released each other.

It was rare for Linley to have such a look of utter joy on his face. Turning to look at Miller and Livingston, he said, “Miller, so sorry. I interrupted your officiating over this tournament.”

“It’s fine,” Miller hurriedly said, but then looked at Linley in confusion. “Brother Linley, you and Reynolds...?”

Linley casually rested his hand against Reynolds’ shoulders. “Reynolds is my friend, one of my closest, dearest brothers, like a real brother.” Reynold laughed as he slapped Linley on his shoulders as well. “Third Bro, don’t say such sappy things.”

“Haha...” Linley laughed with great happiness.

The village tournament was held in accordance with the normal rules, of course, but many of the youngsters, upon seeing Linley and Reynolds together, felt utterly stunned. They had bullied Reynolds in the past, serving him regular meals of punches and kicks. If Reynolds was to tell Linley, and Linley was to tell Miller...

Given Miller's legendary severity in dealing out punishments, they would be doomed.

"This Reynolds... how did this Reynolds get involved with Master Linley?" Videle and the other youths felt full of regret.

After the tournament's officiating ceremonies were ended, Miller, Livingston, Linley, and Reynolds departed together, heading to the restricted area; Monica's home.

"Uncle Miller, I shouldn't go," Reynolds saw that distant copse of trees and immediately said.

This was a restricted area.

Miller laughed. "No need. Since you are Linley's bro, come along with us. It is no big deal." Miller suddenly frowned and let out a laugh. "Reynolds, you called me Uncle Miller... but I address Linley as brother. This... this really is... amusing, haha."

Linley and Reynolds were both startled. Only now did they realize this as well.

Livingston laughed as well. "Miller, enough chitchat. You each can address each other as you should. You and I are both over a thousand years old, yet we know Saints who are over four or five thousand years old. Don't we all just address each other by name?"

"I'm just making conversation." Miller pursed his lips unhappily.

Reynolds began to laugh as well. Even the normally icy-faced Miller had his humorous side, it seemed. Most likely, very few people in the village had ever seen Miller laugh. Reynolds understood... only in front of experts of his own level would these people joke about so freely.

"Miller, let's hurry. I'm very curious about those experts you mentioned," Linley urged.

Linley had always felt a hint of anticipation whenever he thought about the experts in this mysterious village. He knew... these experts were perhaps some of the people whom the War God had spoken about, those 'experts who were quietly training in seclusion'. These experts weren't very well known in the

continent these days. Or perhaps, long ago, they were very famous. These experts, in terms of power, were much stronger than the famous people of the current era.

Passing through the dense copse of trees, they arrived at a large grassy area, filled with flowers and with stone benches and stone tables placed nearby.

In the center of the grassy area was a round lake.

Passing by the grassy area, they arrived at a location next to the mountainside. Next to the mountainside were several stone houses. The mountainside itself had been hollowed out as well with several tunnels.

“Big Brother Reynolds!” an excited and happy voice rang out, and from a nearby tunnel, a figure dressed in white came running out. Seeing the jade-haired, beautiful girl, Linley turned to look at the expression on Reynold’s face.

Linley laughed softly. “Fourth Bro, no wonder you weren’t willing to leave.”

Reynolds let out an awkward chuckle.

The look Linley saw on Reynolds’ face made Linley feel as though he had seen a doppelganger. The playboy Reynolds could actually be embarrassed? Could it be that this time, Reynolds had really fallen?

“Big Brother Reynolds, what are you doing here?” Monica grabbed Reynolds by the hand. She was very excited. Reynolds immediately walked with Monica off to one side, then whispered and explained to Monica, who immediately turned to stare at Linley in surprise. “He’s Linley?”

“Haha, I hear Linley came?” a loud laugh could be heard.

Three figures emerged from the other side of the grassy area. The person who had just spoken was an old man with snow-white hair but the ruddy complexion of a child. The other two? One was a rather chubby, friendly-seeming middle-aged man, while the other man who walked between them was an elegant middle-aged man with long black hair who wore a moon-white long robe.

The elegant middle-aged man was clearly the leader of the three.

“Father.” Monica immediately ran towards the elegant middle-aged man, tugging his hand affectionately as she pointed towards Reynolds and introduced

him. "Father, this is the Reynolds who I spoke to you about."

Monica had immediately introduced Reynolds, making him nervous.

This was the tantamount to seeing his father-in-law for the first time. Most importantly... his future father-in-law seemed to be an extremely incredible personage.

"Not bad." The elegant middle-aged man favored Reynolds with a friendly smile. Miller immediately introduced, "Lord, this Reynolds originally went to the same school as Linley. They are close friends. For them to be able to meet with us here means that the bonds of destiny tie us together."

As Miller spoke, he walked towards the elegant middle-aged man, while at the same time, he mouthed something.

The elegant middle-aged man's face froze for a moment, but then it returned to normal. However, when no one was paying attention, he snuck a peek at the little Shadowmouse, 'Bebe', on Linley's shoulders. The smile on his face instantly increased in friendliness by another 30%.

"Linley, hello. Very happy to be able to meet you. Haha... let me introduce you," the middle-aged man spoke in an extremely friendly manner. Pointing to the ruddy-faced old man, he said, "This is my good friend who came here with me, Hayward. He is a magus as well, but he is a fire-style magus."

The red-faced elder, Hayward, chuckled towards Linley. "The ninth rank by age twenty-seven. Truly admirable."

"This gentleman is Foreman. He's a Saint-level warrior, and like you, he trains in the Elemental Laws of the Earth." The elegant middle-aged man laughed. "I have another friend who is currently in training. He should be arriving a while later. Oh, right. I haven't introduced myself yet."

The elegant middle-aged man smiled as he stared at Linley. "My name is Desri. I train in the Elemental Laws of Light."

Linley's heart shook slightly.

It was him after all!

According to the War God, the Yulan continent had five Prime Saints who

were only one step removed from becoming Deities. Fain of the War God's College was one such, while another was an expert named Desri in the Anarchic Lands.

Linley understood that experts such as these people could defeat him with just one move, much like how Fain had caused him to collapse and nearly pass out with one attack.

Both Fain and Desri had reached the doorway to the Deity level. With one step past that doorway, they would reach it, but that step was extremely hard. Cesar, for example, who had previously been on par with Fain, had taken thousands of years as well, but upon breaking through and taking that last step, he had become a Demigod.

"Respectful greetings, Mr. Desri," Linley said humbly.

Desri laughed calmly. "Come, let's take a seat inside. My wife should be arriving soon as well."

Everyone immediately headed into a nearby tunnel.

"Whoah." Linley stared with astonishment at the architecture inside the mountain. The insides had been hollowed out, creating a large, empty space with all sorts of rooms and courtyards built inside. Most importantly, the ceiling above was filled with all sorts of gemstones, filling the area with a multicolored, dazzling, dream-like light.

Inside the mountain, the sound of dripping water from a mountain spring could occasionally be heard. It seemed so peaceful.

The temperature today was rather low, but inside the mountain, it was much warmer and quite comfortable. In an empty area, there were multiple square tables that were covered with all sorts of fruits and delicacies.

"Linley, take a seat first. Let me go call my wife. Hayward, you and the others can keep Linley company for now." Desri smiled, then immediately headed deeper inside. After taking a number of twists and turns, Desri arrived at a sealed stone room.

The sound of stone rumbling could be heard, and the stone door swung open. A jade-haired beautiful woman dressed in a noble white robe walked out. At a

casual glance, she looked nearly identical to Monica. Only when one stared at her more closely would one notice that she was a bit more mature and poised than Monica.

“Wife.” Desri laughed as he looked at this lady. “Come. Today, not only has Linley come, but Reynolds has come as well.”

The beautiful woman frowned. “Why did that Reynolds come?” She truly disliked this pretty-boy who had suddenly appeared out of nowhere and wanted to pursue her daughter.

“Reynolds and Linley are good friends who grew up together,” Desri explained.

“So what if they are? Linley’s nothing more than a genius.” The beautiful woman didn’t hold Linley in any particular regard. “If it wasn’t because his rate of training is so fast and if we were only to look at his current level of power, how could he be worthy of me leaving my training for him?”

Desri laughed as he shook his head. “Wife, I think you had best not prevent Reynolds and our daughter from being together, and you need to alter your attitude towards Linley.”

“Why?” The beautiful woman frowned.

Desri said confidently, “Go take a look at that Saint-level magical beast on Linley’s shoulders and you’ll know why. I think... when you see it, your attitude will change.”

The Terrifying Power of Grand Magus Saints

“Oh?” The beautiful woman was surprised.

A hint of a smile was on Desri’s face. When he had seen Bebe on Linley’s shoulders, he had been shocked as well. As soon as he saw Bebe, Desri had decided... he had to build up a good relationship with Linley, no matter what the cost was.

In Desri’s heart, he found it hard to believe that Bebe would recognize a human as his master.

But Desri understood that since Linley was Bebe’s master, then building a good relationship with Linley was absolutely necessary.

“I want to see what sort of magical beast this is.” Seeing the secretive air that Desri was putting on, she chuckled then followed him out. After walking for a while, Desri and his wife arrived at the place where Hayward, Livingston, and Linley and the others were.

The beautiful woman immediately stared at Linley’s shoulders.

But... there was nothing on Linley’s shoulders.

“On the table,” Desri’s voice rang out in the beautiful woman’s mind. Only now did the beautiful woman notice that adorable little Shadowmouse, Bebe, was holding a cup of wine and drinking it in a very satisfied manner. “The fur is black!” The beautiful woman’s heart shook.

Mice with black fur weren’t necessarily restricted to just the lowest type of Shadowmice.

Perhaps the Radiant Church and the War God’s College weren’t familiar with what Bebe was, but the Anarchic Lands and the Frost Goddess Shrine definitely were.

“Father. Mother.” Monica was extremely happy, but upon seeing her mother,

Monica began to worry for Reynolds. She knew what sort of temper her mother had.

Desri and the beautiful woman walked towards the table together, taking the hosts' seats.

"Desri's wife?" Linley stared at this beautiful woman in astonishment. In terms of hair and every other aspect, Monica and her mother looked identical. Outsiders would think that they were siblings. However, that icy aura surrounding this beautiful woman made Linley feel surprise in his heart.

"Yet another expert, one who isn't much weaker than Miller."

Linley once more felt that the War God's words were very true. The War God had said... of those experts who had quietly trained in seclusion for thousands of years in the Yulan continent, aside from the Deities, the highest tier was the five Prime Saints including Fain and Desri. The second tier was the tier of the Holy Emperor, while the third was Haydson. Haydson's level was just an ordinary level amongst the hidden experts.

This was the reason why Olivier had tasted bitter defeat in the Arctic Icecap. After all, he wasn't even able to defeat Haydson. Who could he possibly defeat?

Desri said warmly, "Linley, let me make the introductions. This is my wife, Pennslyn."

"Sincerest greetings, Madame," Linley said humbly.

A friendly smile appeared on Pennslyn's face. "I truly am sorry. I've been training this entire time and just came out now. I hope you don't mind." As soon as she said these words, the nearby Monica was shocked. Her mother's temper was such that aside from Monica's father, her mother paid others no heed.

But... her mother had actually apologized? Was being polite?

Was this her icy, cold mother?

This was the first time Linley met Pennslyn. Naturally, he didn't know about her normal temper. He thought Pennslyn was very friendly by nature, and he immediately laughed, "Madame, you are too courteous."

“Monica, this is the Reynolds you’ve spoken of?” Pennslyn chuckled as she looked over at her daughter, and then her gaze rested on Reynolds. Reynolds had been warned by Monica early on, and thus he felt some dread towards this future mother-in-law of his.

Monica hurriedly said, “Yes, mother.”

“Sincerest greetings, Madame.” Reynolds felt rather nervous.

An approving look was in Pennslyn’s eyes. “Mmm, not bad at all. Monica... good eye. Why didn’t you bring Reynolds over sooner?” These words from Pennslyn instantly filled Reynolds with joy. It seemed as though this future mother-in-law had taken a liking to him.

But Monica was flabbergasted once again.

Was this her mother?

Linley’s impression towards Pennslyn became even more favorable. Just at this time, a clear, loud voice rang out. “Big Brother, I hear we have guests?” A middle-aged man with long, dazzling golden hair walked in. His gaze immediately fell upon Linley, but at the same time, when he noticed the nearby Bebe, he raised an eyebrow.

“Higginson, hurry on over. You are the last one.” Desri laughed.

Immediately, Desri turned to look at Linley. “Linley, Higginson, like Hayward, came alongside me to this place. He also trains in the Elemental Laws of Light.”

“Sincerest greetings, Mr. Higginson,” Linley immediately said.

Higginson found an empty seat and sat down, then laughed, “Linley, don’t be so courteous. Just treat this place like you would your own home.” Hearing these words, Linley felt warmth in his heart. Desri and his gang truly were incomparably hospitable.

Within this inner mountain residence, there were some serving maids as well.

The serving maids brought over all sorts of delicacies, and the group began to engage in idle conversation. Reynolds and Monica sat there, not daring to say much. It was primarily Desri and the others chatting with Linley, while occasionally mentioning Bebe.

But today, Bebe didn't have much to say. As Linley would've described it... Bebe was 'playing it cool'.

Over the course of this discussion, Linley had discovered that the leader of this group was Desri, of course, followed by Hayward and Higginson, who had come to this place alongside Desri. Next was Miller, Livingston, and Foreman. This was obvious because... Miller, Livingston, and Foreman all addressed Desri as 'Lord', while Hayward and Higginson addressed him as 'Big Brother'.

After the meal.

After having eaten and drank their fill, these people naturally wanted to go do something.

Linley and the other experts naturally wanted to engage in some sparring.

"Linley, Foreman is also a practitioner of the Elemental Laws of Earth, just like yourself. How about you two have a spar?" Miller chuckled, while a hint of a smile appeared on Foreman's face as well, revealing two large dimples. "Miller, there's no need for me to spar with Linley. My training path in the Elemental Laws of Earth is roughly the same as Haydson's. Since he has already competed against Haydson, there's no need for him to spar with me."

Livingston glanced at him. "Foreman, you scared?"

Desri laughed, "Foreman speaks the truth. His power is almost identical to Haydson's. There's not much point to him sparring with Linley. How about this... Hayward, why don't you spar with Linley instead?" Desri glanced at Linley. "Linley, you need to be careful. Hayward's power is extremely strong."

"But he is a Grand Magus Saint." Linley still remembered Desri's introduction.

"So what if I am?" Hayward laughed.

Linley let out an awkward laugh. In his view, a Grand Magus Saint without the protection of a magical beast who was to engage in open battle against a Saint-level warrior would be at a great disadvantage. Linley asked, "Mr. Hayward, can it be that you don't have a magical beast companion?"

"I did, and he was a Saint. But unfortunately, he is dead already." Hayward sighed.

Desri nodded. “Two thousand years ago, for the sake of protecting Hayward, that Saint-level magical beast died. That time, another one of my close friends died as well. I wanted to save him, but I wasn’t able to help in time... alas...” Desri, Hayward, and Higginson seemed to be reminiscing about past events.

Linley was secretly shocked.

Despite Desri having been there, a Saint-level magical beast had died in order to protect Hayward. Just how fierce had that battle been?

“Why did you bring up magical beasts? Can it be that you believe a Grand Magus Saint with no magical beast is inadequate?” Hayward looked at Linley with a laugh.

Linley could only chuckle.

As Linley saw it... in sparring with a Grand Magus Saint, he would rely on his speed to charge over and defeat the opponent before his opponent had even had the chance to use any magic. Wouldn’t that be an easy victory? If he were to allow his opponent to use his magic, on the other hand, then he probably wouldn’t even have a chance to run.

The main thing that mattered was speed. What was the point of competing?

“Linley, after reaching the Saint level, you’ve been living in the O’Brien Empire, right?” Desri suddenly said.

Linley nodded. “Right. What of it?” Linley was confused as to why Desri would suddenly ask him this.

Desri laughed, “That makes sense. The O’Brien Empire is famous for its warriors, while the Yulan Empire is famous for its magi. Most likely, all the Saints you encountered in the O’Brien Empire were Warrior Saints, and you haven’t truly sparred against a Grand Magus Saint.”

Linley started.

This was indeed the case. All the people he had competed against were warriors. There wasn’t a single magus.

Longhaus was a Grand Magus Saint, but they hadn’t dueled.

“Grand Magus Saints are far fewer in number than Warrior Saints. However,

the ratio isn't as lopsided as in the O'Brien Empire." Desri sighed. "In the continent, generally speaking, out of every four Saints, one is a Grand Magus Saint while the other three are Warrior Saints. But in the O'Brien Empire, perhaps only one Grand Magus Saint will appear for every ten or more Warrior Saints. The ratio is far too low."

"The Yulan Empire is different, however. In general, one out of every two Saints is a Grand Magus Saint." These words from Desri made Linley's heart tremble.

One to one ratio?

The Yulan Empire truly was the wellspring for magi. Desri continued, "The Holy Union is also famous for its magi. However, the Holy Union is famous more for its basic-level training, while the Yulan Empire has the High Priest, which is why it has so many Grand Magus Saints. Generally speaking, all of the disciples of the High Priest have the potential to become Grand Magus Saints."

Linley's heart clenched.

Two freaks!

One War God, one High Priest.

One trained a heap of Warrior Saints, while the other taught a heap of Grand Magus Saints.

"Grand Magus Saints aren't as simple as you think them to be. Let me tell you this. In a one on one battle between a Grand Magus Saint and a Warrior Saint, the Grand Magus Saint has the greater chance of victory." Desri laughed. "Grand Magus Saints find it harder than warriors to train and advance to begin with. Even in a place such as the Yulan Empire, which highly prizes magi, the ratio is still only one to one."

Linley nodded.

It was true that magi found training to be far harder than warriors. Linley had always thought it strange... since it was so hard for magi to train, if they were inferior to warriors at the Saint level, wouldn't that be very unfair? But in the O'Brien Empire, Linley had witnessed how powerful Warrior Saints were.

As for Grand Magi Saints? He hadn't.

"Come, Linley. Let's go... today, let Hayward show you how powerful Grand Magi Saints are. That way, when you meet Grand Magi Saints in the future, you won't be caught off-guard." Desri stood up.

Linley immediately rose to his feet as well.

Only after a true spar would he learn how powerful Grand Magi Saints were.

At this time Bebe hopped onto Linley's shoulders as well, and their group left the cave estate. Reynolds and Monica couldn't fly, so they stayed inside. Everyone else left and flew out of the valley.

Linley and the others flew to a different part of the mountain.

"This is the place where we usually spar against each other. You'll spar here," Desri said.

Desri, Hayward, Higginson, Miller, Livingston, Foreman, Pennslyn, Linley. In total, there were eight of them standing there in mid-air. Linley and Hayward moved to stand opposite of each other at a distance of a hundred meters.

"Come." Hayward chuckled. Linley, not hesitant in the slightest, removed his outer robe and immediately Dragonformed. Those ferocious spikes erupted forth from his forehead, and his draconic black tail began to sway from behind... and his eyes turned dark golden.

Linley's body suddenly flickered. "Boom!" He charged towards Hayward at high speed.

"Linley's speed is a bit faster than last time." Miller noticed Linley's improvement. "But he's still unable to overcome Hayward."

Smiling, Hayward didn't move at all. He just quietly waited for Linley to arrive. When Linley reached a distance of ten meters from him, Hayward finally made his move. He transformed into a flash of blazing light in the blink of an eye, immediately pulling away from Linley. The distance between the two actually increased.

In terms of flying speed, Linley was inferior to Hayward.

"But..." Linley's face changed. If his flying speed was inferior, didn't that mean

the opponent would be able to cast spells and easily devastate him? Indeed, moments later, a terrifying blast of heat began to emanate from Hayward's body, and countless flecks of light began to swirl around in the air above Hayward.

A brilliant, clear bird cry split the air!

Two gold-tinged red wings, that crown-like crest of feathers, those cold, arrogant eyes... this terrifying creature was a size larger than even those gigantic dragons. Before this massive Fire Phoenix, Linley and the others were like ants.

"Crackle." The air itself began to crackle from the terrifying heat, which forced Linley to raise his defenses.

"The forbidden-level spell, 'Phoenix Metamorphosis'?" Linley felt a surge of panic.

Fire magic was reputed for its offensive power, and its single-target attack, the 'Phoenix Metamorphosis' spell, was only weaker than the 'Dimensional Blade' spell. Linley didn't have the ability to deal with it yet.

The Fire Phoenix suddenly shrank in size, but it appeared to become more substantial. When it shrank to the size of ten meters in length, in all aspects, be it the plumage or the gaze, it looked just like a real magical beast. The entire body of the Fire Phoenix had turned golden.

But although it had shrunk in size, the amount of pressure it was exerting on Linley had increased to a terrifying level.

"Whoosh!" The Fire Phoenix charged straight towards Linley, whose body was now covered by a layer of that roiling azurish-black mist. This was the Pulseguard Defense that Linley was so proud of.

"Rumble." Linley's azurish-black battle-qi was being burned away at a visible rate. "If this continues, I'll only be able to sustain it for a few more seconds." Linley immediately flew backwards, and the Fire Phoenix flew back to Hayward's side as well. Only then did Linley let out a sigh of relief.

This golden Fire Phoenix was simply too terrifying.

Laughing, Hayward looked at Linley. “Both Warrior Saints and Grand Magus Saints can fly once they reach the Saint level. As far as flying speed goes, warriors are not necessarily faster. For example, wind-style magi and light-style magi... are extremely fast. Even I, a fire-style magus, am extremely fast, given my current level of training. Just through speed alone, I can make sure that you are unable to catch me, while I easily trample you.”

“But of course, those entry-level fire-style or water-style Grand Magus Saints are inferior to you. In terms of speed, Grand Magus Saints are still a bit weaker than Warrior Saints. But despite that, there are Grand Magus Saints who are faster than Warrior Saints.”

Linley understood.

In terms of speed, Warrior Saints might have an advantage, but that didn’t mean all Grand Magus Saints were slower. Some of them flew at an astonishing speed. If one were to encounter an extremely fast Grand Magus Saint, then that would be dangerous... upon meeting such a person, the only choice was to flee.

“But of course, this sort of technique is only suited for a minority of Grand Magus Saints,” Hayward continued. “Now, come attack me again. I’ll show you the technique that Grand Magus Saints usually use against Warrior Saints.”

Linley suddenly had the feeling...

That perhaps, Grand Magus Saints truly were more terrifying than Warrior Saints.

“Are you ready?” A visible smile was on Hayward’s face.

Sparring

Desri, Higginson, Miller, and the others all quietly watched this sparring competition from afar.

“Now, let’s pretend my speed was lower than yours.” Hayward grinned at Linley. “Come attack me. Watch how I deal with you.”

Linley felt a hint of anticipation.

If his speed was inferior, how would a Grand Magus Saint cope?

Linley suddenly moved, transforming into a black blur. As Linley moved, Hayward also transformed into a flaming blur, retreating at high speed, but clearly his speed was far lower than Linley’s.

“I want to see how you are going to block me.” Linley stared at Hayward.

“Boom!” “Boom!” “Boom!” “Boom!” Suddenly, the air was filled with house-sized chunks of flaming meteors. The large number of flaming meteors carried tremendous power as they slammed towards Linley, and in a blink of an eye, they completely covered the space in front of Linley, forming a barrier in front of him.

Linley’s facial expression changed.

Fire magic of the ninth rank – Scorching Meteor Shower.

This technique, although much weaker than the forbidden-level spell ‘Heavenly Meteor’s Descent’ in terms of both scope and single-target damage, still forced Linley to have to break through these countless meteors if he was to continue attacking Hayward.

The meteors were clustered so densely that there was no space to dodge at all.

“Bang!” Linley charged forwards, smashing hard against a flaming meteor.

Those massive flaming meteors were knocked flying by Linley, one after the other, while some others exploded and split apart. But although Linley's body was tough enough that he didn't fear these attacks, the constant impacts against these meteors caused his speed to decrease quite a bit.

"Bang!" With a punch, he shattered the final flaming meteor in front of him. Linley finally saw the distant Hayward.

Hayward stood there in mid-air, his face covered with smiles. "Linley, you lose again."

Linley nodded.

"Your spells of the ninth rank are unable to hurt me, but they can greatly lower my speed. By the time I charged out, you probably would've already used a forbidden spell." Linley understood this very well, but he didn't have any choices. Those meteors weren't like ordinary rocks, and Linley had to use great force to break each one of them.

The nearby watching Desri said, "Linley, the most basic method that Grand Magus Saints use against Warrior Saints is to instacast spells to block them while retreating at high speed, then utilizing forbidden-level spells to attack them."

Linley nodded.

"However, Mr. Hayward, you were able to instacast a spell of the ninth rank. This truly is..." Linley now knew how terrifyingly powerful this man was. Even while depending on the Coiling Dragon ring, Linley was only able to instacast spells of the seventh rank.

Hayward chuckled, "But of course. Most Grand Magus Saints have very powerful spiritual energy, but can only instacast spells of the eighth rank. The reason I can instacast spells of the ninth rank is only because I've trained for many years and thus have even stronger spiritual energy."

Linley secretly sighed, "His Phoenix Metamorphosis can cause a Fire Phoenix that was hundreds of meters tall to condense into a phoenix which was only ten meters tall. I've never even heard of such a thing."

Generally speaking, the Phoenix Metamorphosis spell was capable of creating

a Fire Phoenix that was roughly a hundred meters tall, and which was already frightfully powerful. But Hayward... clearly was one of the most powerful of Grand Magus Saints.

“But in a dangerous situation, if a Grand Magus Saint was to wildly and repeatedly instacast spells of the eighth rank at you, they would still be able to slow you down,” Hayward said with certainty.

Linley nodded and laughed. “However, it wouldn’t be effective as you, Mr. Hayward, instacasting spells of the ninth rank. It would take me far longer to break through your Scorching Meteor Shower. If it was a spell of the eighth rank that was used to block me, my speed probably would’ve been much faster.”

“Linley, you can be considered a peak-level Warrior Saint. An ordinary Warrior Saint wouldn’t be able to break through an instacast spell of the eighth rank as quickly as you,” Hayward said.

Linley nodded.

Linley fully understood now... it was like how an ordinary person could sprint a hundred meters in ten seconds, but if he were running atop a track of mud, he might take fifteen seconds or even longer. Mud, to ordinary people, didn’t pose much of a threat either.

But it definitely would be able to slow their speed down.

“Linley, you must understand; the most important thing for a Grand Magus Saint to do when fighting against a Warrior Saint is to lower the opponent’s speed! Instacasting spells is one method, while for example darkness spells includes maledictive slowing spells... as long as the Grand Magus Saint can prevent you from catching up to them for a time, then the Grand Magus Saint will use that chance to utilize forbidden-level spells against you.”

Desri and the others flew over as well.

“Now that you’ve encountered a forbidden-level spell from a Grand Magus Saint, you should know how powerful they are.” Desri chuckled towards Linley.

Linley nodded.

Forbidden-level spells truly were terrifying. For example, that Phoenix

Metamorphosis. Even if Linley were to stab straight through the skull of the Fire Phoenix, it would still constantly attack him, because it was a creature formed from elemental essence and wasn't actually alive. A forbidden-spell like this was even more terrifyingly strong than a Saint-level magical beast.

At least Saint-level magical beasts feared injury.

To deal against forbidden-level magical spells, the only option was to break it by repeated blows and make it run out of energy.

"Linley," that beautiful lady, Pennslyn, smiled as she spoke. "Instacasting and slowing the opponent's speed is a rather passive way for a Grand Magus Saint to deal with an opponent. Actually, Grand Magus Saints have another powerful method."

"Oh?"

Linley stared at Hayward in astonishment. "Mr. Hayward, can it be that you have other tools at your disposal?"

Grand Magus Saints were too terrifying!

Hayward nodded. "Of course. This method is a fallback method which Grand Magus Saints rely upon. Linley, come and try to attack me again. If you experience it yourself, you will understand it clearly." As he spoke, Hayward flew backwards, pulling once more to a distance of a hundred meters away from Linley.

"The fallback method they rely on?" Linley was curious.

"Boom!" Linley once more charged towards Hayward, but Hayward didn't move at all, only staring at Linley with confidence.

Once Linley drew near him though, Linley's face suddenly changed. He felt a terrifyingly powerful storm of mental energy suddenly surround him and attack his spirit. In the blink of an eye, Linley suddenly felt dizzy, and his body swayed. Only after several seconds later did he fully recover.

Several seconds, to Saints engaging in battle was more than enough to determine the outcome.

Linley stared at Hayward in astonishment. "Mental attack?"

“Haha...” Miller flew over, laughing. “Linley, that isn’t a mental attack. If it was a mental attack, your head would be splitting from pain and you would’ve collapsed.”

Desri and the others flew over as well.

Desri personally explained to him. “Linley, what’s the biggest advantage magi have over warriors?”

“Mental and spiritual energy.” Linley didn’t hesitate at all.

Desri nodded. “Right. Magi possess the most powerful spiritual energy. The spiritual energy of a Grand Magus Saint is as powerful and boundless as the seas. They are far more powerful than that of a Warrior Saint. Aside from those few Grand Magus Saints who just entered the Saint level, the vast majority of Grand Magus Saints are capable of using this sort of basic ‘Mindstorm’ attack.”

“This Mindstorm attack doesn’t require any understanding of any Elemental Laws. It is nothing more than a spiritual energy based attack that uses a great deal of spiritual energy to strike at the opponent’s soul. This sort of tactic is very simple. Upon reaching the Saint level, a Grand Magus Saint will quickly come to understand it,” Hayward said with absolute certainty.

Linley understood this as well.

The so-called ‘Mindstorm’ just then felt like a tremendous amount of spiritual energy smashing upon his soul time and time again, even though it didn’t actually cause much damage to the soul.

“Hayward, naturally, developed his own unique spiritual attacks long ago. If he truly were to use his spiritual energy against you, you would be in trouble.” Desri laughed.

Linley now understood the basic underpinnings of these mental attacks (or spiritual attacks). It was to form that normally soft and weak spiritual energy into sharp ‘knives’ and repeatedly stab at the opponent’s soul. This sort of attack was truly frightening! If one’s soul wasn’t strong enough, it might be directly shattered and destroyed.

“Mindstorm! Haha...” Hayward shook his head and laughed. “This name was created by Grand Magus Saints long ago. But in truth, it’s nothing more than a

very basic mental attack. It is only useful against Warrior Saints who are far weaker in mental energy.”

Linley felt a sense of dread.

Grand Magus Saints truly were powerful.

Whether by instacasting spells to slow movement or by using Mindstorm type attacks to attack the soul... they had methods to be highly effective.

“Grand Magus Saints are far fewer in number than Warrior Saints. Generally speaking, Grand Magus Saints have an advantage.” Higginson laughed loudly. “Linley, Warrior Saints have their experts, but Grand Magus Saints have their own as well. Who is stronger? That depends on the person.”

Linley nodded.

If he were to truly fight all out against Hayward, when faced with Hayward’s meteor blockade, he would’ve used his Profound Truths of the Earth – Hundred Layered Waves attack to blow a tunnel straight through all of the blocking stones.

In the past, Linley’s sword blow had created a tunnel in an entire mountain.

Just then, Linley was playing the role of an ordinary expert. But if this were a true life-and-death battle, most likely Bebe would’ve gotten involved as well. If Bebe and Linley were to charge forward together... given Bebe’s speed, how many Grand Magus Saints would be faster?

Even if they used mental energy to attack, could it be that they could simultaneously attack Linley and Bebe?

“Grand Magus Saints being stronger than Warrior Saints is just a generality. It can’t be treated as an absolute,” Linley understood.

But of course, if this Hayward wanted to kill him, it would be very easy. All he would have to do is use a mental attack. Given Hayward’s ability, he could definitely cause Linley’s head to hurt badly enough to make him collapse, and then Hayward could use the Phoenix Metamorphosis to attack. He wouldn’t even have had the chance to flee.

There is always someone mightier than the mighty.

Hayward was mighty, but if he were to encounter Fain, he probably wouldn't be able to do anything. After all, Linley had personally witnessed how powerful Fain's mental attack was.

On the flight back with Desri's group, Bebe was mentally chatting to Linley while standing on his shoulders. "Boss, when in the future you reach the Saint level as a magus, you'll be both a Dragonblood Warrior and a Grand Magus Saint in one. Hrmph... by then, beating them will be easy."

Linley chuckled.

If he were to reach the Saint level in his human form as a warrior and also as a magus, the synergistic power would probably increase his power by dozens of times, if not more. By then, Linley most likely would be confident in his ability to deal with even the likes of Fain and Desri.



*

The imperial capital of the Yulan Empire. Master Longhaus' residence.

Delia was seated in a courtyard alone, drinking some tea while flipping through some of Master Longhaus' magical tomes. The Wildthunder Stormhawk, Parry, as well as the Worldbear, Hatton, were off to one side, chatting in the language of magical beasts.

"Hrm?" Delia saw something of interest in the magical tome. Her eyes lit up and she smiled.

Grand Magus Saints truly did have a deep understanding of magic. Delia felt that she truly was reaping great benefits here.

"Someone's coming," the Worldbear, Hatton, suddenly said. Delia stared questioningly towards Hatton. "Someone is coming? Why haven't the guards informed us? Big Yellow, are you just making things up again?" Delia laughed as she looked at the Worldbear, Hatton.

The Worldbear stared at Delia with wide eyes. "Delia, you don't believe me? Am I that sort of bear?"

“Someone really is coming.” Delia sensed it as well by now. In terms of environmental awareness, she was far inferior to a Saint-level magical beast.

Soon afterwards, footsteps could be heard from the outside.

“Might I ask if Master Longhaus is here?” A calm, confident voice could be heard.

“Come in,” Delia said casually. For this person to be able to come in unannounced meant that he definitely was no ordinary figure. The door was pushed open, and two handsome youths walked in at the same time. Delia immediately rose to her feet. “Respectful greetings, your Imperial Majesty.”

Of those two youths, one was the Emperor of the Yulan Empire, his Imperial Majesty, Emperor Rande.

Emperor Rande’s eyes lit up when he saw Delia. Laughing, he said, “Delia, you are growing more and more beautiful. Right, where is your teacher?”

“Your Imperial Majesty, wait a moment with George,” Delia said, then she turned to look at the Worldbear. “Big Yellow, ask Teacher where he currently is. His Imperial Majesty wishes to meet with him.” The youngster who had come alongside Emperor Rande was indeed the youngest Grand Secretary of the Yulan Empire, the highly-favored minister, George.

Forget It!

Emperor Rande smiled towards Delia. “Delia, We haven’t seen you in quite some time. Ever since you’ve returned from the O’Brien Empire, you haven’t gone to the imperial palace.” Emperor Rande was roughly the same age as Delia and they were on quite good terms.

“Teacher is quite strict. I have to train hard and study my magic.” Delia pretended to be resigned.

Emperor Rande laughed.

Right at this time, the Worldbear, Hatton, said to Emperor Rande, “Hey, blue-hair. My master says you can come in.” The Worldbear wasn’t the slightest bit courteous in his words, but Emperor Rande didn’t mind in the slightest. “Big Yellow, even if you don’t address Us as ‘your Imperial Majesty’, you should at least call Us ‘Rande’. That way, We would at least save a bit of face.”

“Is ‘Big Yellow’ a name that the likes of you can call about?” The Worldbear turned his big furry head away, seemingly very disdainful.

Rande chuckled, then after saying a few words to George and Delia, he entered the inner room. Right now, only George and Delia were left inside the courtyard. Delia had a very good impression of George... because George was Linley’s good friend.

Second Bro, ‘George’. He was the most rational and most reliable of the four bros.

He had a very good temper and rarely grew angry at others. He had extremely good relationships with people.

But Delia knew very well that George was also an extremely formidable person. At such a young age, he had become one of the Grand Secretaries of the Yulan Empire. It must be understood, the world of officials and

bureaucracies was a dark, sinister place. For someone to reach such a powerful, influential official position and even become a Grand Secretary meant that in secret, George surely used quite a few tricks as well.

As to who was most vicious amongst the four bros, it was George, amiable, good-natured George, who had become the most vicious.

“George, sit.” Delia laughed.

George smiled and sat down. “Delia, last year, you should’ve seen Third Bro in the O’Brien Empire. Oh, by Third Bro I mean Linley.” In his heart, George longed for his dear bros, but as a high-level member of the Yulan Empire, he simply didn’t have the opportunity to visit the O’Brien Empire.

“I know.” Delia’s smile was very bright. “Linley’s often thinking about you as well.”

George felt warm in his heart.

After separating from Linley, over ten years had passed. George was now twenty-nine years old, nearly a man in his thirties. He even had two children. Those crazy childhood days were beautiful recollections.

The ten years he had spent in bureaucracy had caused George to become more and more mature and more and more crafty. But the more mature he became, the fewer the number of people he truly trusted in the Yulan Empire.

“I feel very proud that Third Bro was able to reach his current accomplishments.” George sighed emotionally. “In the O’Brien Empire, most likely no one would dare to offend him. In this entire world, only upon reaching the pinnacle of power can one be confident.”

“Linley has gone to the Anarchic Lands,” Delia said.

“The Anarchic Lands?”

George frowned. He remembered the enmity between Linley and the Radiant Church which he had found out about in Hess City. In particular, with those high-level people of the Radiant Church. George knew very well how powerful the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows were in the Anarchic Lands. “Given Third Bro’s temperament, he definitely wouldn’t be interested in just taking

over territory. That means...”

George looked at Delia and whispered, “Third Bro is about to begin his battle against the Radiant Church?”

Delia felt a hint of shock in her heart. George truly was formidable.

“Right.” Delia nodded. Linley had told her about this long ago.

George began to worry. He knew what sort of temper Linley had. In the past, for the sake of vengeance, Linley was willing to give up everything. If it had been him, George, he definitely would’ve continued to secretly endure until he reached the point where he had absolute certainty of victory. Then, he would make his move.

“Is Third Bro confident of victory?” George looked at Delia. “The Radiant Church isn’t as simple as it would appear to be.”

Delia laughed as she looked at George. “George, Linley isn’t as simple as you think he is either.”

George laughed. Indeed. Despite being a genius, George never imagined that after they separated, Linley would become so powerful that he could fight Haydson to a virtual standstill. In particular, that Shadowmouse, Bebe... George felt quite speechless. “That little rascal, Bebe. He’s so monstrously powerful. What a freak.”

After a while later, Emperor Rande came out.

“George, let’s go,” Emperor Rande said to George, and George immediately stood up. Emperor Rande smiled towards Delia, who was sending him off. “Delia, if you are free, you can come to the imperial palace for a stroll. The Third Princess has been missing you.”

Delia laughed. “I definitely will go.”

“Then there’s no need for you to send me off.” Emperor Rande laughed, then left alongside George.



The imperial palace. Emperor Rande's study. There were only three people present; Emperor Rande, his personal palace attendant, and the leader of the Leon clan.

"Dylla." Emperor Rande put down the quill in his hand, raising his head to smile towards Dylla Leon. "Today, We have summoned you for the sake of your daughter, Delia."

Dylla Leon looked at Emperor Rande. "Your Imperial Majesty, what do you mean?"

Emperor Rande smiled. "As We recall, your daughter is yet unwed."

"Right." Dylla Leon nodded.

Had Emperor Rande taken a fancy to his daughter?

Emperor Rande nodded. "That's right. In honesty... We rather like Delia. How about this. Help Us say a few words to Delia on Our behalf, and see if Delia is willing to marry Us. But of course... you have to let her make her own decision."

Dylla Leon said respectfully, "Your Imperial Majesty, don't worry. Your servant shall definitely go ask Delia."

Emperor Rande nodded and smiled as he looked at Dylla Leon. "Dylla, you should understand that when We were but a prince, We had to have children before We could assume the throne. We don't have much affection towards that woman. In terms of lineage as well as character, Delia is far superior to her. If Delia was willing to marry Us... We promise that Delia can become the Empress."

Dylla Leon's heart trembled.

Empress?

If his daughter were to become an ordinary concubine, there would be no need for the mighty Leon clan to agree. But the Empress... now that was a different situation.

Dylla Leon knew quite well that this Emperor Rande was an extremely upright and extremely bold person. If he said Delia would become Empress, he would definitely make that happen.

“Alright, you can go now,” Emperor Rande said with a faint laugh.

“Yes, your Imperial Majesty.” Right now, Dylla Leon’s heart was still in a state of excitement.

Dylla Leon immediately sent someone to summon Delia home. Delia actually didn’t wish to go home. Each time she did, her parents would try to persuade her on the subject of marriage. Although Delia insisted that Linley was now outside the O’Brien Empire and that her marriage to Linley wouldn’t pose any problems to the clan, it seemed as though her parents didn’t really like Linley.

In Dylla’s eyes, Linley’s younger brother had wed the Seventh Imperial Princess, Nina, after all. There was an indisputable relationship between Linley and the O’Brien Empire.



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“What?” Delia immediately rose to her feet, staring at her parents in astonishment.

Her mother hurriedly said, “Delia, his Imperial Majesty’s age is close to yours, and he is one of the boldest, most competent Emperors in the history of the Yulan Empire. You are on good terms with him as well. If you were to marry his Imperial Majesty... it would be wonderful for both you and the clan.”

“It would be wonderful for the clan, but how would it be wonderful for me?” Delia couldn’t help but be furious.

She hadn’t thought that the reason her parents had summoned her back so urgently was to discuss this with her.

“Delia, can it be that his Imperial Majesty isn’t talented enough? Do you dislike him?” Dylla Leon hurriedly said.

Delia said angrily, “Father, what does his Imperial Majesty’s talent have to do with me? No, I don’t dislike him. But there’s many people I don’t dislike. Does this mean I have to marry them all? Marrying someone has nothing to do with whether or not I ‘don’t dislike them’, understood?”

“Delia, his Imperial Majesty’s feelings for you are genuine. He said that so long as you marry him, in the future, you would definitely become the Empress,” Dylla said hurriedly.

“Then what about the current Empress?” Delia frowned.

Dylla Leon laughed calmly, “That Empress was just someone the Emperor married when he was only a prince. She isn’t very capable, and she was born to a common noble clan. There have been many people unhappy that she became Empress. It will be easy for his Imperial Majesty to remove her.”

“Hrmph!”

Standing, Delia stared at her father. “Father, perhaps to you, the position of Empress is very important, but to me, it isn’t worth a fart.” The furious Delia began to spout obscenities.

Dylla Leon was so angry that he slapped the desk and stood up as well. “Delia, how can you say such things?”

“Father.” Delia stared at her father. “Don’t try and put on a brave show in front of your daughter. Let me make it clear for you today... with regards to his Imperial Majesty, you can forget it! Even if I die, I won’t marry him. I won’t marry anyone aside from Linley.”

Dylla Leon stared disbelievingly at his daughter. His daughter actually dared to speak to him in such a manner?

“I’m sorry, father.” Delia took a deep breath.

“Cough... cough...” The furious Dylla Leon began to cough. Dylla’s mother immediately went to assist him, but Dylla stared angrily at Delia. “Delia, you are no longer a child. Don’t be so rash and immature. Enough. Go back and think it over.”

Delia glanced at her red-faced, coughing father, then silently turned her head and left.

“What happened to my parents?” Delia could still remember how when she was a child, her father and mother had treated her like a precious treasure. Whatever she wanted done, her father would do. She had even ridden on her

father's back like a horse.

Her childhood memories were so beautiful, and her parents were so perfect.

But now...

Delia cared about her family. Her parents, her Big Brother, her grandmother, her other relatives... Delia had always hoped that she would be able to be together with Linley, while maintaining the relationship with her clan.

"I'll wait a bit longer. I'll wait for Linley to found his duchy. By then, father's attitude would change." Delia chose to continue to endure.



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In the mysterious village. On the wide expanse of grass in front of the cave estate. Desri, Hayward, Miller, Pennslyn, and the others were seated around a stone table, drinking wine while watching Linley and Higginson spar. As for Reynolds and Monica, they were at the side of the grassy area.

"Monica, were you telling the truth in the past when you described your mother?" Staring at the distant Pennslyn, Reynolds then looked at Monica in puzzlement.

Monica didn't know what to say either.

In the past, her mother was always rather cold and distant. It must be understood... her mother came from the Frost Goddess Shrine. That sort of cold arrogance was bred in the bones. But these past few days, Pennslyn had treated Linley and Reynolds unbelievably well.

Reynolds had even begun to suspect if Monica had lied about her.

"I don't get it either." Monica was truly speechless.

At this moment, Linley was wielding his adamantine heavy sword, while Higginson was wielding a silver, blurred longsword. The two were sparring, and Linley had begun to truly use his 'Profound Truths of the Earth'. Although he hadn't gone full force, it was still enough to cause Higginson to sigh with surprise.

“Bizarre, bizarre.” Higginson sighed in praise. “I’ve never seen such a bizarre attack.”

Linley stared helplessly at Higginson as well. Dealing with an expert of the Laws of Light truly was a pain. This was because once a person reached a certain level in the Laws of Light, his self-healing abilities would become extremely terrifying. Even broken arms would self-repair in a short period of time.

“Linley, at this time, you should take a look at my ultimate attack.” Higginson smiled.

Linley was startled. Up till now, Higginson had demonstrated a speed that was even faster than that of Olivier’s. But he had been just playing around?

“The name of this sword technique is ‘Illusionary Void Sword’.” Wielding that silver longsword, Higginson suddenly transformed into a line of white light, appearing before Linley in the blink of an eye. A layer of azurish-black energy was swirling around Linley, and his adamantine heavy sword was at the ready as well.

Linley paid careful attention to the sword.

Why was it called ‘Illusionary Void Sword’?

“Rumble...” The space itself in the surrounding area began to shudder and ripple. The silver longsword clearly appeared before Linley’s eyes, but the strange thing was, Linley felt as though the longsword had transformed into multiple layers, and the nearby space had transformed into multiple layers as well. It was as though space itself had turned chaotic.

“You lose.”

Before Linley even had the chance to react, that sword came to a halt in front of Linley’s eyes. Linley hadn’t even had the chance to resist or to block.

“This...” Linley’s mind was totally preoccupied with that sword. He felt as though he had suddenly mentally found something. He immediately descended to the ground and closed his eyes, beginning to meditate. Without paying any attention at all to the nearby people, he immediately began to try hard to find that sense again.

The Order Comes Down

Higginson stood there staring at Linley. Linley had actually immediately begun to train without paying attention to anyone else.

“Amazing, amazing.” Higginson let out a sigh of praise, then flew over to Desri. Desri’s group was staring at Linley with approval in their eyes as well. All of them sat down, and Hayward laughed, “Big Brother, this Linley truly is a genius. Even when sparring with Higginson, who uses the Elemental Laws of Light, he will still have some insights.”

Desri’s group of people were all amongst the highest-class Saints.

Seeing Linley do this, they knew that Linley must have gained some insight into something important, which was why he had immediately started training.

“Uncle,” Reynolds had immediately run over after seeing Linley’s actions. “What’s wrong with Linley? Is he wounded?”

“Haha...” Desri and the others began to laugh loudly. Miller laughed and said, “Reynolds, Linley is fine. However, it is hard to say how long he will be in training. For those of us at our level, it is very hard and rare for us to suddenly gain an insight.”

Only then did Reynolds relax.

Currently, Linley’s mind was filled with all sorts of movements. A longsword-wielding figure was flashing about in his mind, once again stabbing at him using the technique Higginson had just displayed. Higginson’s sword had seemed like an illusion...

The sword striking out. The flash of light. The distorted space...

Those folded, blurry layers of space... that terrifying penetrative power... it had seemed unstoppable.

“What is it? What exactly is it?” Linley was repeatedly thinking on this matter,

and in his mind, he replayed that sword attack over and over. For an instant, upon seeing that sword, Linley seemed to have understood something.

But it was extremely blurry!

Again and again, he replayed the attack in his mind, concentrating on it whole-heartedly.

Suddenly—

It was as though a lightning bolt had suddenly flashed in Linley's mind. Linley's heart shook, and that layer of obscuring fog was stripped away. He finally understood that sensation he had felt. "Right. It is the wind. The wind! The 'Fast' aspect of the wind!"

Linley's heart was filled with wild joy.

Previously, when Linley had witnessed Miller using the 'Slow' aspect of the Elemental Laws of the Wind, Linley had come to understand the direction in which he should train the 'Slow' aspect. Linley had learned that the power of his 'Tempos of the Wind' technique could increase.

This was because the 'Tempos of the Wind' was similar to the Profound Truths of the Earth. With the Profound Truths of the Earth, the more vibrational waves created, the more powerful the attack was.

By that same logic, the 'Tempos of the Wind' utilized the combined forces of the 'Fast' and the 'Slow' aspects of the wind to create the frictional force that created a spatial edge attack. The deeper his understanding of the 'Fast' and the 'Slow' aspects of the wind became, the more powerful his combination attack would become in creating a more powerful 'Tempos of the Wind'.

After having sparred with Miller, Linley's insight into the 'Slow' aspect of the wind was slowly increasing.

But his progression in understanding the 'Fast' aspect of the wind had come to a standstill.

Elemental Laws of the Wind – What was the path to training in the 'Fast' aspect?

But today, after seeing Higginson's 'Illusionary Void Sword', Linley now clearly

understood how he should proceed. “Of the Elemental Laws, in terms of speed, the Elemental Laws of Wind and the Elemental Laws of Light have an advantage. Higginson is fast, so fast that in the instant of his attack, space itself is distorted. But the ‘Slow’ aspect of the Elemental Laws of the Wind can cause space to suddenly freeze. Right... the Elemental Laws of Wind, in their ‘Fast’ aspect, should also be able to instantly cause space itself to distort into multiple layers.”

Linley already had some basic insights into the ‘Fast’ aspect of the Elemental Laws of Wind, and he had been pondering it for some time now.

But now, he knew exactly what his goal was... Linley’s mind began to rapidly ponder how to train. It was as though he now knew the starting point and the endpoint. What he now needed to do was to decide what was the best way to go about on this path, and then actually follow the path to its endpoint.

Linley’s mind played countless scenarios in his mind, and gradually, his insights into the ‘Fast’ aspect of the Elemental Laws of the Wind deepened as well. Whenever he could no longer resolve a question in his mind, Linley would stand up and use the Bloodviolet flexible sword to test out a theory on the spot.

This was the nature of training; tough, pain-staking, and occasionally needing a burst of insight.

It was as though a person had suddenly seen a flash of light and seen the rough picture of the road ahead of him. He now had the general idea of where he should go. All that had to be done next was to continue studying and continue testing. As long as one had enough time, one would definitely be able to reach that goal.



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To be able to gain insights into the ‘Fast’ aspect of the Elemental Laws of Wind from watching a sword technique based on the Elemental Laws of Light wasn’t something that just anyone could do. Right now, Desri and the others didn’t have any idea what Linley had suddenly understood.

“It’s been over half a month, but Third Bro, he...” Reynolds stared at the meditating Linley with some urgency in his eyes.

The nearby Monica laughed. “Big Brother Reynolds, last night, I saw Linley suddenly stand up and then perform what appeared to be a sword technique. However, his sword was so blurry and indistinct. When that violet light flashed, the wind began to blow all around him, and the speed of his sword was very fast as well. I couldn’t see anything clearly.”

“If Third Bro continues like this, who knows how long it will take,” Reynolds said with some agitation.

“Big Brother Reynolds, look.” Monica suddenly pointed towards Linley excitedly. Reynolds turned to look... and saw that Linley had already stood up and was smiling towards Reynolds while walking over to them. “Fourth Bro, what’s the matter? Did a flower blossom on my face?”

At this moment, a black blur suddenly streaked out, leaping onto Linley’s shoulders.

“Bebe.” Linley lovingly rubbed Bebe’s head.

Bebe quirked his lips unhappily. “Boss, it’s been half a month. You sure can sleep.”

“Sleep?” An involuntary laugh escaped Linley’s mouth.

He knew that while he was training, Bebe had definitely been extremely bored. However, Linley was in an extremely fine mood today... because he had made progress in the ‘Fast’ aspect of the Elemental Laws of the Wind. Linley understood very well that in order to reach the power of that sword attack of Higginson’s, he would most likely need to spend at least ten or so years.

As for reaching Miller’s level in using the ‘Slow’ aspect of the wind, he would most likely only need three or four years.

Clearly... Miller had a much lower level of understanding than Higginson. Linley was secretly delighted. Indeed, sparring with experts truly did allow one to improve much faster.

If he had been training by himself in the mountain the entire time and training

aimlessly, if he was lucky, perhaps in ten years or a hundred years, he would've found the correct path. If he was unlucky, he might spend hundreds or even thousands of years before finding the correct path.

This was the nature of training. If you gained insights quickly, you trained quickly. If you gained insights slowly, you would train slowly. After all, not too much time was needed after one reached the Saint level for one's battle-qi to reach the limits of the Saint level. Everyone spent their time on increasing their insights into the Laws... for example, Olivier was able to defeat Dillon as soon as he had reached the Saint level, precisely because Dillon had virtually no insights into the Elemental Laws. There was nothing for it.



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In the northern part of the Anarchic Lands, a large-scale campaign had begun.

As per Linley and Zassler's plans, roughly seven or eight days after Linley headed off to the mysterious village, Barker and the others began to attack southwards, invading one of the duchies controlled by the Radiant Church. The name of this duchy was the Sherry Duchy.

The soldiers of the Sherry Duchy were inferior in quality to Linley's forces. Linley's people lived very close to the Forest of Darkness, and were thus highly accustomed to violence. They had a much greater battle strength. And of course, they had the five Barker brothers leading them into the fray.

Utter devastation!

The most powerful experts of the Sherry Duchy were nothing more than three experts of the eighth rank. They didn't have a single expert of the ninth rank. How could the Sherry Duchy possibly stall Linley's forces at all?

Barker and his brothers were like five gods of battle as they led their ravenous troops into a slaughtering invasion, breaking past all defenses. In just four days, the prefectural city and five smaller cities of the Sherry Duchy had all been taken over. Linley's territory had just dramatically expanded.

Gates, Hazer, and Ankh all stayed within the prefectural city of Sherry.

“They are totally unable to fight back,” Gates said loudly. “Too weak. Too weak. There’s no one here who can even slow us down.” Indeed. Even if they did meet with strong resistance, who would be able to fight in single combat against the likes of Gates and the others?

In addition, the Saint-level magical beast, the Blackcloud Panther, Haeru, had been in a state of readiness this entire time, ready to attack.

“Andrew.” Ankh suddenly turned to stare at a silver-haired middle-aged man behind them. The man immediately bowed, awaiting Ankh’s order. Ankh asked, “Right now, how is the reorganization of the Sherry Duchy’s military proceeding? And what is the situation amongst the masses?”

In order to manage a country, one naturally had to use appropriate personnel. Barker and the others were only used for military conquest.

“Milords,” Andrew said respectfully. “Currently, the military reorganization has already concluded. We have placed many soldiers of Blackdirt City into their ranks as well.”

Barker and the others didn’t fully trust these surrendered troops. Thus, the only thing they could do was to try and spread them out as much as possible, preventing them from easily coordinating with each other. At the same time, they killed some people while inserting their own loyal followers.

“The Sherry Duchy has been dominated by the Radiant Church for a long time, and there are many believers in the Radiant Church here,” Andrew said with concern. “I believe if the Radiant Church was to come attack us, the masses might even rebel against us. But there are too many people here. There’s not much we can do.”

“Rebel?”

Hazer said confidently, “What are we afraid of? Threatened with death, how many waves can these commoners possibly cause?”

“Andrew, we have just taken over the Sherry Duchy. Right now, the people are still restless. We’ll have to trouble you to handle it,” Ankh instructed. Andrew respectfully assented to the order.

“Enough. You can leave now.” Ankh laughed. Soon, only Ankh, Hazer, and

Gates were left.

Ankh looked at his two siblings. “The results of Mr. Zassler’s meetings have come. We are ordered to stop attacking for now, and prepare to found our duchy half a month from now. By now, we have over ten million people under our banner.”

Hazer and Gates both grinned.

“I didn’t expect that the Radiant Church wouldn’t fight back at all. It seems they don’t want to go against us head on.” Gates laughed. “Then just like how we originally planned, we’ll continue to put on an act. Only after we publicly announce the founding of our duchy will we continue our attack against the Radiant Church.”

The Radiant Church really was spineless. The Church indeed had convinced Hazer and Gates... that they were unwilling to face their forces head on.



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The golden-haired middle-aged man once again arrived at the dimly-lit room.

“Lord Praetor,” The golden-haired middle-aged man said respectfully.

Seated behind his desk, Osenno’s eyes were flickering with flames. He calmly said, “Right now, Linley’s side has just taken over the Sherry Duchy. They will definitely spend quite some time absorbing it. I trust they now believe we aren’t willing to fight them.”

The golden-haired middle-aged man looked towards Osenno and said excitedly, “Are we going to attack?”

“Our attack must utterly annihilate Linley’s side.” Osenno’s voice was freezing cold. “This Linley poses an enormous threat to our Radiant Church. If he is allowed to flourish, then we won’t live to regret it. Even now, he already dares to provoke us and attacked the Sherry Duchy. Clearly... he intends to fight against our Radiant Church.”

“Since they want to fight, then we must annihilate all of the experts on

Linley's side." His voice grew even colder, and a devilish purple light flickered in his eyes.

The golden-haired middle-aged man grew more and more excited. But then, he said in confusion, "Lord Praetor, can it be that we are going to use Saints? But wouldn't that result in dissatisfaction from the Cult of Shadows, the O'Brien Empire, and the other sides?"

"No need to worry about that," Osenno said coldly. "If Linley is allowed to continue to expand, then the work that the Church has carried out for thousands of years here in the Anarchic Lands is going to be laid waste. In addition, Linley himself cannot be permitted to grow further. His rate of improvement is simply too terrifying. Right now... I still have the ability to kill him. But if this continues..."

Osenno looked at that golden-haired middle-aged man. "Enough. Carry out our original plans, and begin the protocols."

"Yes, Lord Praetor," the golden-haired middle-aged man assented.

"Tomorrow night, nine Saint-level Angels will immediately head out... and I myself will have a good 'meeting' with that rat-type pet of Linley's." Osenno was extremely confident. He was on the same level of power as the Holy Emperor, and was a full level higher than Haydson's.

He was fully confident in his ability to kill Linley.

A Sudden Change of Events

The night was pitch-black. Dark clouds covered the moon, and the entire world was cast in shadows. Suddenly... from the north, nine streaks of white light blazed through the sky at high speed towards the Sherry Duchy. Halfway there, five of the streaks of white light changed to fly towards each of the five small cities around the Sherry Duchy, while the other four streaks of light flew towards the prefectural city of Sherry.

If one drew near, one would discover...

That these streaks of light were awe-inspiring Angels who were radiating a soft, holy light. Every single one of these Angels had four wings. For them to immediately enter their Angel forms meant that the bodies they had descended into were fully capable of sustaining their might.

According to the hierarchy of Angels...

Two-Winged Angels were low-level Angels, Four-Winged Angels were middle-stage Angels, while Six Winged Angels were peak-stage Angels. As for Eight-Winged Angels... those were of the Demigod-level. The legendary Twelve-Winged Angels possessed the awe-inspiring might of a Highgod.

Unfortunately, in the Yulan continent, it was impossible to find a body capable of withstanding the descent of a Twelve-Winged Angel.

“What a pity...” Osenno, flying behind those four Angels, mused to himself while staring at them. “The Radiant Sovereign created these humanoid constructs, but there is no chance of them making any breakthroughs. No matter how long they live for, their power will not change at all.”

People of Osenno’s level knew a great deal about what Angels were.

Angels, in truth, weren’t living creatures. They were humanoid constructs that the Radiant Sovereign had created in the Divine Realm of Light. Of course,

Osenno had no idea how they were created, but he understood that Angels would never be able to break through. No matter how many wings they were created with, that was how many wings they would forever have. For example, the Radiant Church had Angels who had lived for thousands of years, but their power was the exact same level as it had been thousands of years ago.

Although Angels were powerful, they were not capable of advancing.

This caused Osenno to somewhat look down on the Angels. He just treated the Angels as tools. On this day, his forces consisted solely of Angels, aside from himself. Not a single human Saint had come. As far as Osenno was concerned, the lives of human Saints, who were capable of advancement, were far more valuable than these Angels.

Within one of the smaller cities in the Sherry Duchy, a Four-Winged Angel descended into the center of the city. The soft, holy radiance around the Four-Winged Angel suffused the surrounding area, turning the night into day and illuminating the city.

Seeing this light, the citizens of this village all came running out.

“Ah! Angel!”

“An Angel!”

Everyone here was awestruck. Due to the long-term presence of the Radiant Church, many of these people believed in the Radiant Sovereign. Now, all of them had the feeling that the emissary of the Lord had come to save them.

Countless civilians fell to their knees.

“Those who have faith in the Lord shall receive the Lord’s protection. Those who betray the Lord shall be destroyed in the end.” The Four-Winged Angel’s voice penetrated throughout the little city, and over half of the four thousand soldiers in the town fell to their knees as well. As for the others who came from Blackdirt City, they stood there, feeling astonished.

An Angel?

A legendary Angel?

“Kill those heathens!” Suddenly, someone drew out his sword and stabbed a

nearby military officer to death. Many of the military officers here were from the prefectural city of Moat. They didn't believe in the Radiant Sovereign, and had even destroyed several churches in recent days.

But today...

A large number of nearby soldiers as well as civilians began to charge forward to kill all of the outsiders.

Without having to do a single thing, the Four-Winged Angel had reclaimed this city.

"Followers of the Lord, the Lord shall definitely give you his protection," the Four-Winged Angel's voice rang out.

The entire city was on its knees, filled with sincerity and faith. A smile appeared on the face of the Four-Winged Angel. He had easily discovered that there were over ten or so people here who trained in light magic. The Four-Winged Angel landed on the ground and walked towards one of the experts. "What is your name?"

The silver-haired old man was very excited. He respectfully said, "Oh, mighty and venerated Lord Angel, my name is Felton. In the past, I was a priest in the Radiant Church here in this town. I was lucky enough to survive."

The Four-Winged Angel nodded. "From today onwards, Felton shall be the city governor for this city." The Four-Winged Angel's voice shook the skies, penetrating the entire city.

"Felton!" "Felton!" "Felton!"

The citizens of this village all began to shout loudly in joy. As they chanted, the Four-Winged Angel flew into the air, and in a burst of dazzling, holy light, the Four-Winged Angel left this little city and flew towards the prefectural city.

The other four little cities saw the exact same happen. The appearance of the Angels caused the believers of the Radiant Church to go crazy, and they fearlessly slaughtered the 'heathens', while those who trained in light magic or light-style battle-qi became appointed the new city governors.

As for the prefectural city of Sherry...

When the other five Four-Winged Angels had arrived, fires could be seen everywhere, because there were many soldiers who had come here from the prefectural city of Moat or from Blackdirt City, causing the battle here to be extremely intense.

“Lord Praetor.” The five Angels flew to Osenno’s side.

Osenno stood in mid-air, watching the three major battles going on below. Three Four-Winged Angels were currently engaging in battle with three Undying Warriors.

“Undying Warriors?” one of the Angels called out in surprise. Osenno nodded calmly. When Osenno had brought these four Angels to the prefectural city, due to the majestic awe-inspiring presence of the Angels, countless citizens began to attack Linley’s forces.

Even some soldiers had turned traitor.

This battle was extremely unfavorable for Linley’s side.

“Fuck off!” A terrifying, three-meter-tall body that looked like a war machine, with bulging, muscled arms the size of a human waist. The man was covered with a layer of marble-like armor, revealing only his face, which was an awe-inspiring green color.

A Saint-level Undying Warrior!

Three Four-Winged Angels fighting three Saint-level Undying Warriors.

“Second brother, these guys are too fast,” Gates shouted angrily. The three people here were Gates, Hazer, and Ankh. All three of them were only warriors of the ninth rank. Even after transforming into Undying Warriors... they were only early-stage Saints. Perhaps they had the advantages of possessing the terrifying ‘defense’ and ‘strength’ inherent to Undying Warriors, they were able to fight the middle-stage Four-Winged Angels head on... but the Angels were too nimble.

A Four-Winged Angel very agilely swooped in from the side, kicking viciously against Gates. That kick, easily capable of shattering boulders, landed directly on Gates, but it only caused his body to tremble slightly.

Gates suddenly stared up at the sky, and saw that even more Angels had come. He immediately shouted, "Second brother, third brother, let's go, now! More Angels are coming!"

They weren't even able to handle three Angels, but six more Angels could now be seen above them, along with that human Saint. How could they win this battle?

"Let's go. The Radiant Church is really going all-out this time." Ankh growled with anger as well.

With mighty leaps that caused the ground to shake and shatter, the three flew wildly towards the north like human meteors. However, of the Four Supreme Warriors, the Undying Warriors had the slowest flying speed.

As for Angels, they specialized in speed.

With a flicker of their wings, four of the Four-Winged Angels instantly appeared in front of Gates and the other two, while the other five remaining Four-Winged Angels appeared behind them.

"Fifth brother, what should we do?" Hazer looked at Gates.

Of the five brothers, Gates usually had the most ideas, but right now, seeing how they were surrounded by nine Angels, he only had the desire to cry. Good heavens. The difference in power was just too vast.

One on one, they could just barely fight to a standstill.

Nine on three? How could they fight?

"What to do?" An insane light appeared in Gates' eyes. "Motherfucker. Let's go all out. If we take one with us, that's a fair trade. If we take out two, we'll have profited." Gates let out a growl, then wildly charged towards the Angels. Although the Four-Winged Angels had good defense, they didn't dare to clash head on against these human-shaped monsters.

The distant Osenno said calmly, "Angel Battle Formation."

Instantly...

Three of the Four-Winged Angels flew away at high speed, while the other six Four-Winged Angels immediately set up the Angel Battle Formation,

surrounding Gates and his brothers. One was above them, one was below them, while four were around them. This sudden encirclement caused Gates, Hazer, and Ankh to all be stunned.

“Break through!” Gates charged viciously against one of those walls of light.

“Bang!”

A terrifying, blazing force pierced towards Gates’ white armor, knocking him backwards.

“Fifth brother, are you alright?” Ankh immediately went to support him.

“I’m fine.” A hint of blood could be seen at the corner of Gates’ lips. “What tremendous force. It should most likely be comparable to a peak-stage Saint. Fortunately, this Undying Warrior Armor is also very strong. Otherwise, I’d be dead.”

Osenno flew over, calmly watching Hazer, Ankh, and Gates. “Saint-level Undying Warriors. The Armand clan?”

Gates and the others didn’t pay any attention to Osenno.

“I’ll give you three a chance. As long as you are willing to surrender to our Church, then I won’t kill you,” Osenno said calmly.

Gates, Ankh, and Hazer exchanged glances.

“Motherfucker, if you have the ability to kill us, then come kill us.” Gates stared angrily at Osenno. “Daddy aint afraid of you!”

Osenno’s face turned cold.

“Do you take your old man to be a fool?” Gates said, staring upwards. “Stop bullshitting. Can it be that your Radiant Church has forgotten Lord Cesar’s warning?” In the past, the King of Killers, Cesar, had said long ago that if the Radiant Church dared to act against the five brothers, then Cesar would slaughter a path to the Sacred Isle.

Osenno snorted coldly.

Indeed, just now he had just been trying to trick Gates. He really didn’t dare to kill Gates and his brothers. After all... he didn’t dare to disobey the words of

Cesar. The King of Killers who had become a Saint five thousand years ago had reached a terrifying level of power long ago.

And in recent years, he had reached the Deity level.

He had become a Deity!

Even if Osenno was ten times as bold, he wouldn't dare to offend him. Offending him... meant that perhaps the Radiant Church would face annihilation.

"Disperse the Angel Battle Formation," Osenno said calmly.

"Hrm?" Gates and the other three exchanged glances. Could it be that Osenno would be so kind-hearted as to release them? But as soon as the six Four-Winged Angels dispersed the Angel Battle Formation, Osenno's body transformed into a black blur. Gates and his brothers didn't have the chance to dodge at all.

"Bang!" "Bang!" "Bang!"

Three vicious kicks landed against each of the three brothers, transforming these three humanoid monsters into meteors which slammed into the ground at high speed.

"Boom!" The ground split apart from the collision, and the earth itself shook violently. Three massive human-shaped craters appeared, with Gates and his brothers in the center of each of them. Their white armor had cracked like a tortoise-shell, and blood was vomiting forth from their mouths.

They could no longer move. Osenno's control of force had been perfect. Although he had badly injured them, they weren't in any mortal danger.

With a flip of his hand, Osenno retrieved three adamantite-alloyed manacles and tossed them to the nearby Angels. "Help me chain them up. You two are responsible for watching over them. The rest of you, come with me to the prefectural city of Moat." After finishing his words, Osenno flew off towards the north, not even looking at Gates and the others, followed by seven Four-Winged Angels who followed him.

Between the prefectural city of Sherry and the prefectural city of Moat was a

distance of a few hundred kilometers.

Gates and his brothers had been suddenly ambushed, and they hadn't had a chance to even warn the remaining brothers. Caught totally off-guard, the prefectural city of Moat was hit by the sneak attack of Osenno and the seven Four-Winged Angels as well. This time, Osenno acted very quickly!

As soon as Barker and Boone had transformed into their Undying Warrior forms, Osenno had given each of them a kick.

“Bang!” “Bang!”

The two Undying Warriors were smashed into the ground by the kicks, creating two man-shaped craters.

“And there's a Saint-level magical beast as well.” Osenno's spiritual energy quickly discovered the Blackcloud Panther, Haeru, who was currently retreating at high speed. As soon as Haeru had seen Barker and Boone be defeated in the blink of an eye, he had known what the situation was. If he were to defeat Barker and Boone at the same time, he would have to spend a little bit of time.

This mysterious human Saint was simply too powerful.

Without even doing battle, Haeru had immediately turned tail and fled.

“Master, master. Come back, quick!” Haeru called out in his mind.

Linley's Return

Osenno transformed into a black blur as he chased after Haeru at high speed.

“He’s too fast! This isn’t good!” Haeru frantically flew towards the southeast at high speed, and as he did, his spiritual energy detected Osenno chasing towards him. In terms of speed, Haeru’s speed was a good bit lower than Osenno’s.

Haeru had a very good understanding of his own level of power.

In truth, Haeru was only an early-stage Saint-level magical beast. Because magical beasts were naturally more powerful than humans, he was able to compete against peak-stage human Saints. For example, the Worldbear was a creature who would be able to defeat most peak-stage Saints as soon as it entered the Saint level. This was a question of inherent gifts!

Bebe was the same as well.

Bebe had only just reached the Saint-level not too long ago, but Bebe belonged to an extremely rare, exalted lineage. Despite only being an early-stage Saint, he was so powerful that even the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, was inferior to him. In terms of inherent giftedness, even the Worldbear was a level lower than him.

“You want to flee?” Osenno quickly saw that the Blackcloud Panther was scurrying away through the air at high speed.

Osenno’s entire body was currently surrounded with dim black flames, making him look like a fiend from hell. Osenno quickly charged towards the Blackcloud Panther, preparing to attack. Haeru, terrified, instantly shrank in size, quickly transforming into a fist-size.

“Swish!”

The now mouse-sized Blackcloud Panther dove directly down into the ground.

“Bam!” A terrifying surge of black flame blasted towards the ground, instantly vaporizing the rocks and the dirt, revealing an incredibly deep tunnel in the ground. Osenno landed near it, peering down into the immeasurably deep tunnel.

“Hmph. You really can run.” Osenno sneered coldly.

Saint-level magical beasts could change their size freely, and after shrinking in size, they could move incredibly fast. Human Saints, by contrast, didn’t have this ability. Although Osenno was extremely powerful, he was far inferior to a Saint-level beast when it came to tunneling through the ground.

Hundreds of meters below the ground.

Haeru frantically continued to dig, creating a natural flow of sharp wind in front of him as he quickly pierced through the dirt.

“Master, Master!”

Haeru was extremely panicked. “Master only said he was going to the south. The distance is too far. We can’t even communicate spiritually.” Magical beasts and their masters had a maximum distance by which they could communicate spiritually. The more powerful the spiritual energy, the greater the distance they could communicate at.

Currently, Linley and Haeru could communicate at a distance of a thousand kilometers.

However... right now, Linley was in the southern part of the Anarchic Lands, fully three thousand kilometers away from Haeru. There was no way Haeru could communicate with Linley. All he could do was vaguely sense the direction Linley was in. Travelling beneath the ground, Haeru ran frantically in Linley’s direction.

Osenno returned to the prefectural city of Moat. In the air above it, he stared at those Four-Winged Angels and instructed, “Take those two Undying Warriors and imprison them in the prefectural city of Sherry along with the other three. I’ll go pay a visit to Blackdirt City.”

With a flip of his hand, Osenno retrieved two more adamantine-alloyed manacles and tossed them to the angels.

“Yes, Lord,” those Angels said respectfully.

Osenno stared towards the north. According to his calculations, Linley should be in the Blackdirt City region right now. “That panther-type beast of his should have gone to inform him. I wonder if Linley will fight or flee!”

And then, Osenno transformed into a black blur and began to fly towards the north.

In the southern part of the Anarchic Lands, within a small forest in the mysterious village, there was a stone room with a stone table inside. Linley and Reynolds had been drinking here all night. It was roughly 3 AM or 4 AM by now. At daybreak, Linley was going to leave.

“In another two or three hours, Bebe and I will both leave. Fourth Bro, when you are free, you can go back to the imperial capital for a while. Your parents most likely have been missing you very much,” Linley instructed Reynolds, and then winked at Monica who was seated next to him. Laughing, he said, “Alright, Fourth Bro, you should go get some rest. You haven’t slept all night.”

Monica and Reynolds were sitting side by side.

“Third Bro, thank you so much for everything,” Reynolds said gratefully.

Whether it was allowing him and Monica to be together, or allowing him to have the special permission of leaving the village once every year, it was all due to Linley. Reynolds understood... given his own abilities, Desri and the others wouldn’t have cared about him at all.

Linley’s lips quirked up in a smile, and he laughingly berated him, “Fourth Bro, why do you stand on courtesy with me?”

“Uh?”

Linley’s face suddenly changed. Haeru was now within a thousand kilometers of him, and Haeru’s voice instantly rang out in Linley’s mind. “Master, things have gone badly. The Saints of the Radiant Church have attacked, and Barker and his brothers have already been captured.”

This news came as a huge shock to Linley.

“Reynolds.” Linley’s face suddenly became grim. “I’m sorry. I have something to take care of. I need to leave immediately.”

“What happened?” Reynolds and Monica were both surprised.

Linley shook his head. “Some private matters. Right. Fourth Bro, you don’t need to worry about it.” Linley squeeze out a smile, then clubbed Reynolds on the chest. “Alright, I’m off.” With a flicker, Linley disappeared, transforming into a blur. Arriving at Desri’s residence, he said in a clear voice, “Mr. Desri!”

In the area around the mountain residence, there were a number of stone rooms. Hayward was currently with Foreman inside one of them.

“Linley, what’s wrong?” Hayward, who had just been in the middle of training, stopped and walked out of the stone room. For Linley to have rushed here at such high speed meant that something must have happened.

A few moments later...

Desri and the others walked out from the residence.

Linley looked at Desri, Hayward, and the others, then immediately said apologetically, “Mr. Desri, everyone... something came up, and I need to leave.” Linley had an apologetic look on his face.

“Did something happen? Do you need my assistance?” Desri asked.

“No need.” Linley shook his head.

Linley knew that Desri and his group had been training in seclusion for a long time now. No doubt, they had no interest in fighting over power or authority. Desri asking him if he needed help was nothing more than him just being courteous. If he truly asked for Desri to go help him deal with the Radiant Church, that might actually make Desri feel resentful towards him.

More importantly...

Over this recent period of time, Linley had come to understand that in the past, Desri had been a member of the Radiant Church. Naturally, he had already left the Radiant Church by now. It wasn’t just Desri; even Higginson had previously been a member of the Radiant Church.

“Everyone, farewell.”

After bowing, Linley instantly utilized the Windshadow spell and flew into the sky. Bebe, who had been sleeping nearby in the grass, instantly transformed into a black shadow as well and flew into the air. A man and his magical beast flew away, just like that. Desri and the others watched them fly out of the mysterious village, out of the mountain, and then continue north at high speed.

It was still late at night.

“Boss, what happened? What’s the rush?” Bebe asked while flying alongside Linley.

“The Radiant Church is playing for keeps.” Linley’s eyes narrowed, emitting a razor-sharp light.

Bebe instantly grew excited. “Oh? The Radiant Church really dares to go head on against us? Wonderful! I’ve been bored to death lately. Now, I can have some good fun.” Bebe’s eyes had a hint of bloodlust in them. “It’s been a long time since I’ve had a nice good slaughterfest.”

Linley’s eyes contained a killing intent as well. “I’ve waited for this day for a long time!”

Linley felt utter hatred from the depths of his heart towards the Radiant Church. Whether it was his father, his mother, or Grandpa Doehring... all of his loved ones had departed for reasons related to the Radiant Church. This superficially honorable but secretly vicious organization was one that Linley had desired to destroy long ago.

Linley and Bebe flew at very high speed.

Soon, they saw a black blur erupt from the ground below and join them, flying next to Linley.

“Master,” Haeru said respectfully.

Bebe immediately called out, “Haeru, what’s the situation? Quick, speak up.”

While flying, Haeru said, “Barker and Boone were staying in the prefectural city of Moat, but today, seven Four-Winged Angels of the Radiant Church and a human Saint came attacking out of nowhere.”

“Seven Four-Winged Angels?” Bebe’s eyes lit up. “Whoah-ho! Awesome!”

“The Four-Winged Angels weren’t so bad, but that human Saint was absolutely terrifying. In the blink of an eye, he kicked the already-transformed Barker and Boone and injured them so badly they couldn’t move. I didn’t dare to fight against him at all. My only choice was to flee. When I fled into the ground, he emitted a wave of black fire that blasted a hole several hundred meters deep. I nearly lost my life. That human Saint is too powerful. I feel he is far more powerful than that Haydson.” Haeru, when discussing Osenno, still felt a hint of fear even now.

Linley pondered this in his mind.

“According to what the War God said, the ‘Holy Emperor’ of the Radiant Church should be a level lower than the likes of Fain and Desri, but stronger than Haydson. The person who came today... it sounds like he is on par with the Holy Emperor.”

Black flame, and power on par with the Holy Emperor...

“Could it be the person who is on par with the Holy Emperor in both power and status... that ruthless, diabolical... Praetor Osenno of the Ecclesiastical Tribunal?” Linley secretly wondered.

Linley didn’t believe that the Holy Emperor himself would attack, but it was very possible that Osenno would.

“Bebe, this opponent should be more powerful than Haydson. You need to be careful as well,” Linley reminded. “This time... we can’t be overconfident in the slightest. When we reach the Sherry Duchy, I’ll cast the Windshadow spell on both of you.”

As a spell of the ninth rank, despite only being a supportive spell, the Windshadow spell still consumed a great deal of mageforce. Fortunately, Linley possessed the Coiling Dragon ring, and by casting spells through the Coiling Dragon ring, he only needed to expend a sixth of the normal spiritual energy and mageforce.

“Windshadow?” Bebe rolled his eyes. “Could it be that he’s faster than me?”

“We can’t be too cocky.” Linley shook his head.

Bebe nodded. Linley said towards Haeru, “Haeru, let me and Bebe handle that human Saint. As for you... go deal with those Four-Winged Angels. When we first arrive, we’ll help you kill a few Four-Winged Angels as well.”

“Yes, Master,” Haeru replied.

Immediately, the man and his two magical beasts flew north at high speed. At around five in the morning, as the sky was just barely beginning to lighten, Linley, Bebe, and Haeru arrived within the borders of the Sherry Duchy. Upon reaching the Sherry Duchy, Linley immediately Dragonformed while also casting the Windshadow spell on Bebe and Haeru.

“Boss, I feel as though your current level of speed has increased quite a bit.” Bebe could sense the extra speed provided by the Windshadow spell, but at the same time, he stared in puzzlement at Linley.

“I had some insights while training on the Elemental Laws of the Wind. Naturally, my speed went up a level as well,” Linley laughed as he spoke. Linley had made breakthroughs in both the ‘Fast’ and the ‘Slow’ aspects of the wind, allowing him to be even more graceful and even faster.

Given that he was a Dragonblood Warrior to begin with, and had the Windshadow spell supporting him, Linley’s speed was now a full level higher than when he had dueled with Haydson.

“How rowdy.” Linley saw one of the small cities of the Sherry Duchy from afar. The families of that town were all extremely active, with lamps lit everywhere. Not too long ago, on this night, two Angels had descended! Naturally, these small cities were filled with so much excitement that nobody could fall asleep. All of them were even firmer in their faith towards the Radiant Church now.

Linley saw quite clearly that the flags on the small cities had all changed, returning to the previous flag of the Sherry Duchy.

“As soon as the Angels arrived, the lost territory was all reclaimed.”

Linley couldn’t be bothered with the small cities. He flew straight towards the prefectural city of the Sherry Duchy. Soon, the man and his two magical beasts arrived in the air above the prefectural city of Sherry. By now, it was day, and

the fresh morning air filled the lands.

The Dragonformed Linley, Bebe, and Haeru stood in the breezy air above the prefectural city of Sherry.

“Only six Angels and Barker and his brothers. No other Saints present.” Linley’s spiritual energy quickly scanned the entire area below.

“Just six?” Bebe seemed rather dissatisfied.

By now, those six Four-Winged Angels had sensed Linley’s spiritual energy. They flew up into the sky at the same time, surrounded by that dazzling holy aura. It was as though six suns had suddenly risen into the skies. At the same time, lightning danced within Linley’s eyes, and he barked coldly, “Kill all six of the Angels!”

“Yes, Boss (Master),” Bebe and Haeru replied simultaneously as they transformed into two flashes of black light, charging towards those six Four-Winged Angels.

Downfall

The citizens of the prefectural city of Sherry knew that there were Angels within the governor's mansion, so many people were continuously watching the mansion. Seeing those six Four-Winged Angels fly out into the air, they instantly began to shout jubilantly... which in turn attracted the attention of even more citizens.

Six Four-Winged Angels. Creatures whom these commoners had tremendous faith in.

"What are those three black shadows? How dare they fight against Angels?" Many people also noticed that the six Four-Winged Angels were currently engaged in a wild battle against three black shadows. In the blink of an eye, the citizens once more shouted in joy...

Because those three shadows had already been completely surrounded by the six Four-Winged Angels.

"Their movements are very orderly and almost perfectly choreographed in sync." Linley laughed calmly as he stared at his surroundings. Just then, Linley, Bebe, and Haeru had charged forward to fight them, but unexpectedly, the Angels had instantly scattered in multiple directions, setting up the Angel Battle Formation in the blink of an eye, surrounding Linley, Bebe, and Haeru within it.

The six Four-Winged Angels had turned into six points of this heavenly cage.

"Growl..." Bebe sent out a claw swipe against one of the Four-Winged Angels, but that pure white light only shuddered and didn't break.

Linley secretly sighed in amazement. This Angel Battle Formation truly was formidable. These were nothing more than six middle-stage Four-Winged Angels, but the Angel Battle Formation they created couldn't be broken by even Bebe, who dared to fight Haydson's 'Worldbreaker' attack head on.

“This magical beast is very formidable. Be careful,” one of the Four-Winged Angels immediately shouted.

At the same time, a brilliant light began to emanate forth from the Four-Winged Angels, blasting forth towards the skies. When it reached a certain height... that eye-piercing brilliance suddenly exploded, temporarily blinding the countless citizens of the prefectural city of Sherry.

Immediately, the citizens began rubbing their eyes, trying their best to stare upwards at the battle.

“Informing Osenno?” Linley said to the six surrounding angels.

“Hrmph. Linley. This time, you will definitely die,” one of the Angels said with certainty. “Soon, the Lord Praetor shall come, and you won’t have the chance to flee.”

“So it really is Osenno.” Linley’s gaze turned cold.

“You think you can defeat the Lord Praetor?” The six Four-Winged Angels were very cold and arrogant. They knew exactly how terrifyingly powerful Osenno was.

The faces of the six Four-Winged Angels turned cold, while at the same time, a thick, powerful blast of holy light was transferred to one of the Four-Winged Angels. Linley knew that this was one of the powerful attacks of this formation. Shaking his head, Linley let out a cold chuckle.

“Whoosh!”

Linley suddenly appeared in front of one of the Four-Winged Angels, and that Four-Winged Angel’s body immediately began to glow with divine light. “How laughable.” That Four-Winged Angel was very confident. According to their reports, Linley’s power was only on par with Haydson. It wasn’t greater than that of the magical beast named Bebe.

If even Bebe couldn’t break the Angel Battle Formation, how could Linley?

A hint of satirizing amusement appeared in Linley’s eyes. If he wasn’t confident, how could he have let himself be ‘trapped’ within this Angel Battle Formation?

“Bang!” The adamantine heavy sword struck against the protective light.

A terrifyingly powerful surge of vibrational force transferred directly into the Four-Winged Angel’s body. Those vibrations actually caused the internal organs of the Four-Winged Angel to instantly rupture and turn into a pile of soft mud. Even Haydson would have been badly injured after taking this blow, to say nothing of the Angel.

The face of that previously very confident Angel instantly turned ashen pale, while fresh blood spurted forth from his nose, ears, and mouth. In an instant, his eyes turned dim, and then like a pile of soft mud, he fell down from the skies, smashing into the ground like a ruptured sandbag and kicking up a cloud of dust.

Profound Truths of the Earth – 150 Layered Waves!

This was Linley’s limit!

“Last time, it was six Angels also. And this time, once again...” Linley laughed coldly. “The Angel Battle Formation is useless against me. But unfortunately, those six Angels who died last time didn’t have the chance to tell you.”

The power of this 150 Layered Waves attack was far stronger than when he had previously competed against Haydson. Even someone as defensively powerful as Haydson probably wouldn’t be able to take two of these hits head on.

“How is this possible?” The other five Four-Winged Angels were still in a state of shock. They hadn’t felt much of an impact against their holy power, but their comrade had died. And at this time, Bebe and Haeru instantly transformed into streaks of black lightning...

“Shkreeeee!” An ear-piercing, heaven-shattering screech.

“Slash.” A Four-Winged Angel wanted to dodge, but Bebe, after having his already-terrifying speed enhanced by the Windshadow spell, was simply too fast. The Angel simply couldn’t fight against him at all. Those sharp claws tore directly into the Angel’s chest and ripped out his heart.

Bebe, with just three claws, sent three Four-Winged Angels falling from the skies, their blood covering the ground.

“Bang!” Haeru killed one of the Four-Winged Angels as well.

“Whooosh...” Linley’s body seemed to have turned into the wind itself, as he flickered everywhere. Sometimes, his adamantine heavy sword moved fast, while sometimes, it moved slowly... in front of the adamantine heavy sword, a spatial edge actually appeared, chopping down at the head of one of the Four-Winged Angels. The Four-Winged Angel, terrified, tried to dodge, but it was chopped into two halves.

Profound Truths of the Wind – Tempos of the Wind.

“Using the adamantine heavy sword with the Profound Truths of the Wind is indeed somewhat weaker.” Linley chuckled calmly as he looked down at the corpse on the ground.

The Profound Truths of the Earth and the Profound Truths of the Wind could be used with any weapon, even fists. Only, the level of effectiveness would vary. If the adamantine heavy sword were used to display the Tempos of the Wind attack, it would only be roughly half as powerful as the Bloodviolet sword. The power was roughly the same as using a knife-hand chop.

Although all of this took a while to describe...

In truth, when Linley used the Profound Truths of the Earth to kill one of the Four-Winged Angels, it happened in the blink of an eye. And then, the other five Four-Winged Angels were killed by Linley, Bebe, and Haeru. Six Angel corpses lay scattered on the ground.

“How... how is this...”

“Imp... impossible...”

The countless citizens of the prefectural city of Sherry all stared. The Angels whom they venerated in their hearts above all other creatures. The ‘Messengers of the Lord’! But the six Four-Winged Angels had died in the blink of an eye by those three shadows.

Linley’s body was covered with a roiling layer of azurish-black battle-qi, and he floated high in the air.

The citizens of the prefectural city of Sherry stared up at this fiend.

“You actually believe in the Radiant Sovereign? What a joke!” Linley’s voice seemed to shatter the heavens like thunder. “The teachings of the Radiant Church are nothing more than a type of deception. In this world, don’t entrust anything to a ‘god’. Rely on yourself. If you are strong, you can even kill an Angel as easily as you can raise your hand.”

The citizens of the prefectural city of Sherry were somewhat baffled.

The Messengers of the Lord. Those six Four-Winged Angels had been killed, just like that. According to the teachings of the Radiant Church, nothing could block the glory of the Lord, and in the face of the Messengers whom the Lord sent, anything blocking them would be turned to ash. But today... the ones that were turned to ash were the Angels!

“Who is this person?” Many people in the prefectural city of Sherry were quietly whispering this question to each other.

“Remember. My name... is Linley!”

Linley’s voice echoed nonstop in the prefectural city of Sherry, and then Linley, Bebe, and Haeru flew into the governor’s mansion. The citizens of the prefectural city of Sherry remained in a stunned state.

“Linley... it’s actually Linley...”

In the Yulan continent, there was only one expert named Linley. It was the grandmaster sculptor, the genius magus, the Dragonblood Warrior... Linley Baruch!

Ever since he knew that he would have to fight head on against the Radiant Church, Linley had decided to no longer conceal his identity. The reputation of a peak-stage Saint was extremely alluring, and so Linley immediately proclaimed his identity. Most likely, some of the other duchies would no longer dare to resist and might even immediately surrender to him.

“Boom!”

Osenno was flying at high speed towards the prefectural city of Sherry. “I didn’t expect that Linley would head to the prefectural city of Sherry. I thought he had fled.” Osenno had badly injured Barker and Boone, then sent people to lock them up with Gates and the other two in the prefectural city of Sherry,

then headed towards Blackdirt City in the night.

But in the area around Blackdirt City, Osenno couldn't find a single Saint-level expert.

"Linley ran away!" This was Osenno's first reaction.

He believed that the Blackcloud Panther had mentally contacted Linley, and Linley had been so terrified that he immediately fled. Osenno was quite disappointed. He had no choice but to return to the prefectural city of Moat. But unexpectedly, just as the sky was beginning to brighten, a dazzling burst of light could be seen from the direction of the prefectural city of Sherry.

It was a signal!

The signal of Linley's appearance!

"Although Linley is powerful, when those six Four-Winged Angels join forces and set up the Angel Battle Formation, even if they cannot kill Linley, they should be able to stay alive," Osenno said to himself. The reason he had arranged for six Four-Winged Angels to be there was so that they could set up the Angel Battle Formation.

After all, they were six Four-Winged Angels! To the Radiant Church, they were still extremely valuable.

When Lyndin and the other five had died, the Radiant Church hadn't minded, because Lyndin and the others were only of the ninth rank, after all. Only when going all out could they have the power of a Saint. The Radiant Church had quite a few of those low-level Angels. But these six Four-Winged Angels were another matter altogether.

To find bodies capable of holding the power of Four-Winged Angels was fairly difficult.

Those bodies had to be of the seventh rank in physical power alone. Only those bodies could allow Four-Winged Angels to descend into them and for their full power to be put on display. Bodies of the seventh rank... the Radiant Church only acquired a few despite thousands of years of searching.

"I've arrived." Osenno saw the distant prefectural city of Sherry and instantly

flew towards the governor's mansion.

Osenno's spiritual energy encapsulated the entire prefectural city of Sherry like a tempest, but his face quickly changed. In the blink of an eye, he arrived in the air above the governor's mansion. He clearly saw that on the main walkway in front of the governor's mansion...

Six corpses!

"All six of the Four-Winged Angels died?" Osenno's heart contracted tightly. Even when the King of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, Dylin, had led his Saint-level magical beasts to attack the City of Fenlai, the Radiant Church hadn't lost many Saint-level experts. But today, in the blink of an eye, they had lost six Four-Winged Angels.

Osenno's dark eyes flashed with cold light, and the temperature around him dropped precipitously. The blood on the corpses of those six Four-Winged Angels actually began to turn to ice.

"Linley, get out!"

Osenno's cold voice shook the heavens. Those citizens of the prefectural city of Sherry, who had just been agitated by Linley, now found to their shock that yet another figure with dark golden eyes was standing in the air above the governor's mansion.

"A challenge to Linley?" Many people felt their hearts tremble.

They had simply been over-stimulated too much today. First, Angels had descended, and then, the Angels had been killed by Linley's forces. But now, yet another Saint had come to challenge Linley... in their entire lives, they had never seen such a constant stream of exciting battles.

"Linley, are you only capable of hiding inside the governor's mansion? Do you think I am unable to find you?" Osenno's voice contained a hint of extreme rage.

In the past, he wanted to kill Linley because Linley was a threat. But now... Linley had killed six Four-Winged Angels. When had the Radiant Church ever suffered such a loss? If Linley was a Deity-level expert, then the Church would only be able to swallow their anger. But Linley's power was inferior to

Osenno's!

"Hide?" a cold voice rang out from the city governor's mansion.

"Osenno, you think too highly of yourself." Regular, stable footsteps could be heard. Linley, dressed in a long, deep blue robe, casually walked to the courtyard with Bebe and Haeru by his side. Those Barker brothers were behind Linley as well. They formed a straight line.

Linley stared upwards at the mid-air Osenno. Osenno stared downwards at Linley as well. Their two gazes met, and as they did, it seemed as though the space between them began to shudder and rumble.

Within several hundred meters around Osenno, the temperature had reached to an extremely low level.

Extreme cold. Deathly silence.

In this area, it was as though Osenno was in total, complete control.

"Whoosh!" Suddenly, a wind arose in this area. The origin of the wind was Linley. Linley's deep blue robe and his long hair fluttered in the wild wind, which twisted upwards towards Osenno. But Osenno was like a boulder upon which the waves broke themselves. He didn't move at all.

"You killed six Four-Winged Angels of my Church. Today, I must kill you, and also let your soul forever be tormented by the flames of hell." Osenno's voice seemed to be as cold as a dagger, piercing into everyone's ears.

Linley stared up at Osenno. His lips curved into a smile. "If you are so tough, then come on over."

The Fierce Battle Against Osenno

Black draconic scales. Fierce, sharp spikes. They all quickly emerged, covering Linley's entire body as he Dragonformed. The blue robe that had been covering Linley's body was torn to shreds by the ferocious battle-qi, and pieces of it fluttered around Linley.

"Go!" Linley's dark golden eyes stared at Osenno.

Instantly, those countless pieces of blue cloth suddenly shot towards Osenno like arrows. As they did, Bebe, who had been directly behind Linley, suddenly disappeared, crossing those hundred meters...

In just the blink of an eye.

The half-meter-long Bebe suddenly appeared in front of Osenno. "Shkreeee!" The ear-piercing screech tore through the skies, while at the same time, Bebe's sharp claws transformed into a fierce storm which tore down towards Osenno.

"Crackle."

Osenno's body immediately exploded with a black flame that emanated from within his body. The black fire surrounded his fist, which clashed directly against Bebe's sharp claws. "Bang!" "Bang!" Eardrum-rupturing collision sounds could be heard repeatedly.

"Swish!" Osenno quickly retreated a hundred meters in an instant.

Bebe stared angrily at Osenno. "Osenno, if you are so tough, don't run."

Just as Osenno opened his mouth and was about to speak, a tempest suddenly appeared in front of him, while at the same time, a scale-covered draconic claw slashed through the air, chopping towards him like a sharp blade.

Osenno once more dodged backwards.

Only now did Linley reveal himself fully. Standing in mid-air, the azurish-black

energy surrounding him, he said, "Osenno, why do you keep on retreating? Didn't you say that you were going to kill me?" Linley's voice was very low. His eyes flashing like cold daggers, he was a heart-shaking sight.

"Boss, those black flames Osenno uses are very powerful. But they shouldn't be able to break your Pulseguard Defense," Bebe's voice rang out in Linley's mind.

"I know. Osenno hasn't used his best techniques yet." Linley was very careful.

With a flip of his hand, Osenno retrieved a pitch-black, narrow and long sword. Osenno stared coldly at Linley and Bebe, the man and his magical beast. "Just now, I wanted to see how strong you were. Indeed... you are worthy of me drawing my blade."

Linley and Bebe on one side. Osenno on the other. Staring at each other.

The citizens of the prefectural city of Sherry stared with bated breath at this battle, the likes of which Sherry City had never seen since its founding.

"Let's go," Linley's voice rang out in Bebe's mind, and the two of them almost simultaneously charged towards Osenno. The adamantite heavy sword in Linley's hand radiated with azurish light, chopping down agilely at Osenno.

Seeing Bebe and Linley charge towards him, Osenno instantly came to a judgment: "This magical beast called Bebe is even faster than me. This Linley is a hair faster than me as well. Our intelligence was wrong?"

Linley's body seemed to drift forward gently as though it was very slow, but also as though it was very fast. It was extremely bizarre.

The deeper his insights into the Elemental Laws of the Wind had become, the faster Linley had become as well.

Bebe was the first to arrive in front of Osenno. Osenno just stood there in mid-air, not moving at all, allowing Bebe to claw at him. But the black katana in Osenno's hands suddenly flashed, then chopped down against Bebe's claws.

"Clang!"

A metallic ringing sound. Osenno's body was sent flying back nearly a hundred meters, but Bebe stood there, not moving at all.

“Bebe.” Linley had a bad feeling.

“Boss, be careful. His katana attacks contain a spiritual attack,” Bebe warned him. “Just then, my head went dizzy for a moment.”

Linley grew nervous. Spiritual attack?

However, from what Linley could tell, this Osenno was a Warrior Saint. Most likely, his spiritual energy wasn't too powerful. This was much like Olivier, who despite being capable of spiritual attacks, only had the spiritual energy of a magus of the eighth rank. Thus, his spiritual attack wasn't too dangerous to people with powerful souls.

“My spiritual energy has reached the ninth rank. I should be able to take it.” Not hesitating at all, Linley once more struck out with his adamantine heavy sword, while Bebe, shaking his head a few times, let out another screech and charged towards Osenno.

Osenno's body flickered as he actually moved forward to face Linley.

“Whoosh.” The adamantine heavy sword flowed gracefully through the air, slashing down at Osenno in an instant. Osenno's black katana seemed to pierce through space itself, coming at an incomparably monstrous speed as it chopped against Linley's adamantine heavy sword.

The adamantine heavy sword and the black katana clashed...

Linley's body was sent flying backwards, and he shook his head in pain.

“Rumble...” A bizarre, terrifying vibration had passed through the black katana and attacked Osenno. It had pierced straight through Osenno's protective layer of infernal black flames and directly attacked Osenno's internal organs. Those terrifying, powerful vibrations caused all of Osenno's organs to shudder.

“Urgh.” Osenno spat out a mouthful of blood.

Osenno stared at Linley in disbelief. He didn't expect that he would have suffered a serious injury in just his first exchange of blows with Linley.

“If this happens another time, I probably won't be able to take it. This Linley's attack is too bizarre and too terrifying. My defenses are useless.” Osenno now realized how terrifying Linley was. “I didn't expect that I would have to use my

ultimate technique to deal with Linley.”

Only now did Linley’s head feel a bit better.

“What a terrifying spiritual attack.” Linley’s heart shook. “It didn’t just attack, it also possessed an illusionary, mesmerizing power.”

“Die!” Bebe charged fiercely at Osenno, the tips of his sharp fangs biting down at Osenno, but Bebe actually passed straight through Osenno. ‘Osenno’ was still in his original position.

“Two of them.”

Linley stared in astonishment. At this moment, there were two ‘Osenno’s standing in mid-air. And they definitely weren’t illusions. Both were real!

“Doppelgangers?” Linley couldn’t believe it.

The two Osenno’s suddenly moved, transforming into four Osenno’s. This was completely different from Olivier’s technique, which relied on high speed movement to create illusions. All of these four Osenno’s were real. Linley’s spiritual energy could detect all four of these Osenno’s and sense their auras.

“This... what in the world is this?” Linley couldn’t dare believe it.

The four Osenno’s stood in mid-air, staring coldly at Linley. The four Osenno’s each said one phrase at a time. “Linley, you really do have some skill. You forced me to use this technique. Just then, you saw that when you attack me, you will find that my body is illusory, but when I attack you, you will find... that my body is real. In other words, I can attack you, but you can’t attack me. Your death is... inevitable.”

The four Osenno’s all flew towards Linley at high speed.

“Die!” Linley flew at high speed towards one of them, but suddenly, Linley utilized his adamantite heavy sword to chop at a different one.

Profound Truths of the Earth – 150 Layered Waves.

However, it was as though he had hit nothing but air. Linley’s adamantite heavy sword passed straight through this ‘Osenno’, not having harmed him at all. But then, this ‘Osenno’ suddenly chopped towards Linley, and Linley quickly used his adamantite heavy sword to block.

“Bang!”

Linley was knocked flying back, and his head felt dizzy yet again.

“How is this possible? How can someone possibly have such a freakish ability?” Linley didn’t dare to believe it. Even when dealing with Fain or Desri, Linley hadn’t had such a hopeless feeling. He couldn’t attack his opponent, but the opponent could easily attack him? What the hell was this?

“Osenno, don’t believe your own lies.”

Bebe’s voice rang out. Linley turned to look at Bebe. Bebe’s little eyes were staring at Osenno. “Others are unable to attack you? If four people simultaneously attacked your four bodies, tell me... would they be able to attack you?” Bebe seemed to be quite familiar with this technique.

All four Osennos were wielding that black katana.

“It seems you understand this technique?” Osenno laughed coldly.

“Of course. Don’t forget. I am a darkness-element magical beast.” Bebe’s body suddenly flickered, and then split into two as well. The two Bebe’s stood there in mid-air. Osenno was stunned as well, and Linley was also awestruck.

The Barker brothers were watching all this from below.

“What the hell?” Hazer looked at Gates.

Gates shook his head, lost. “This battle isn’t one in which the likes of us can get involved in. Let’s just watch.”

Linley flew towards the two Bebe’s, while Bebe said to Linley, “Boss, there is a relatively basic darkness-style attack known as the ‘Stealthwalk Technique’. Once the Stealthwalk Technique reaches an extremely high level, it can be transformed into the Shadowshape Technique. The Shadowshape Technique causes one’s body to merge with the shadows themselves. However... there is a level even beyond the Shadowshape technique which is known as... the Shadowshape Doppelganger Technique. This is something that only Saints can train in.”

“However, Osenno’s Shadowshape Doppelganger Technique is more powerful than mine!” Bebe said.

“So this is known as the ‘Shadowshape Doppelganger Technique’?” Osenno frowned.

“You didn’t know?” Bebe looked at Osenno.

Osenno was silent. In truth, while Osenno had been training in the Elemental Laws of Darkness, he slowly managed to develop this ‘Doppelganger Technique’. As for its name, he had casually decided to simply call it the ‘Doppelganger Technique’.

Shadowshape Doppelganger Technique.

The basic underpinning of the Shadowshape Doppelganger Technique was to create a shadow from another shadow, and then allow the real body to change position at any time from amongst the shadow-bodies.

Just then, when Linley had attacked one of the doppelgangers, Osenno had switched places with one of his other shadows, and then when he attacked Linley, he had switched back.

This technique was very powerful, but in the face of the Godrealm technique of Deities, it was still useless.

“Bebe, when did you learn this technique?” Linley asked mentally.

“Darkness-elemental magical beasts are born knowing some darkness spells and special attacks. Only upon reaching the Saint level was I capable of utilizing this Shadowshape Doppelganger Technique. Unfortunately, I’m not as good at it as Osenno,” Bebe said resignedly. Magical beasts were born with some special, magical skills. The more powerful the beast, the more powerful the magic.

Linley secretly sighed as well.

“And so what if you know it? You will still die!” The four Osennoes moved at the same time. The target... Linley! The four Osennoes attacked together, and Linley quickly flew back... one against four, how could he fight them? He could block one, but the real body would then be in one of the other three.

If he fought head on, he would definitely lose!

“Shkreee!” As Linley retreated, the two Bebes screeched fiercely as they charged forward.

The two Bebes were freakishly fast. The two Bebes engaged in a wild battle against those four Osenno's, but since Osenno could choose between those four shadow doppelgangers, he could dodge much more easily than Bebe.

"Bang!" The two Bebes flew back.

"Bebe, quick, come over to me. Listen to my order." Linley was currently standing in one of the streets of the prefectural city of Sherry. Standing on the ground, his head was upraised as he stared at Osenno in mid-air, quietly awaiting Osenno to come over.

Bebe was somewhat puzzled, but he still flew over towards Linley at high speed.

"Boss, what do you want to do?" Bebe asked suspiciously.

But when Bebe heard Linley's mental response, his eyes instantly lit up, and he once more scurried atop Linley's shoulders. Linley and Bebe just stood there on the ground, staring up at the four Osenno's, not afraid at all.

"Hrm? What trick do you have up your sleeves?"

Seeing how confident Linley was, Osenno was rather suspicious. But when he scanned the area with his spiritual energy, he found that Linley and Bebe didn't have any backup at all, nor were there any apparent traps. In addition, for someone like him, an expert who trained in the Shadowshape Doppelganger Technique, how could he be afraid of a trap?

"Hrmph." Osenno sneered coldly. No longer hesitating, the four Osenno's simultaneously charged down towards Linley!

Baruch

Linley wielded the adamantine heavy sword in one hand, and Bloodviolet in the other. He stood there in the middle of the street, and Bebe was on his shoulders, not moving. The man and the beast stared as Osenno charged over, but when Osenno reached within ten meters of Linley, he suddenly paused.

There was a plot here!

Osenno stared at Linley, who seemed brimming with confidence. He grew a bit nervous.

“What sort of nasty trick does this punk have up his sleeve?”

“What, are you afraid?” Linley, his two swords in his hands, stared at Osenno. “If you are afraid, then just roll the fuck out of my city. It’s fine. I won’t chase you.”

Linley’s words made Osenno so angry, he could vomit blood.

“Chase me?” Osenno secretly cursed Linley in his mind. It was clear and apparent that he, Osenno, had the advantage. But Osenno was born cautious. He truly began to wonder if Linley did indeed have some sort of nasty trick up his sleeve. But seeing how confident Linley was looking, Osenno suddenly thought, “Wait, can it be that Linley is just pretending to be like this to try and scare me away?”

Osenno carefully inspected Linley. “If Linley really had some sort of ultimate attack, he would’ve used it long ago. Why feign weakness? In addition, if one has an ace up one’s sleeve, one wouldn’t be so blatantly self-confident. Being this confident is as good as telling someone you have a technique lying in wait.”

Osenno laughed coldly in his mind. “What is true is false, what is false is true. This punk is trying to play me. I refuse to believe he is able to wound me.”

“Why are you hesitating, Lord Praetor? What happened to your usual awe-

inspiring presence and decisiveness?” Linley mocked coldly.

Osenno stared at Linley’s dark golden eyes. He sneered, “Punk, I still...” Halfway through his words, the four Osenno’s simultaneously attacked Linley with terrifying speed. But right at that moment...

“Rumble...”

Within a hundred meters, the land quickly became covered with a layer of earthen light, and Linley and Bebe’s body became covered with it as well.

Instacast – Supergravity Field, rank seven!

A Supergravity Field of the seventh rank would cause the strength of the gravity affecting one’s body to instantly quadruple. This gravity wouldn’t just impact the muscles; it would also affect the organs and the blood vessels. Even powerful opponents would be slowed when suddenly affected by this.

To a Saint, if you threw a boulder weighing ten thousand tons at him, he would easily shatter it with the flick of his finger, not harmed by it at all.

But the Supergravity Field was different.

For example, the quadruple gravity wasn’t something as simple as just adding a few hundred tons of weight. It could cause the flow of blood in a person’s body to slow and make breathing more difficult... weak people, under a quadruple gravity field, might even die in an instant. Even Saints would have their physical functions impacted.

“Kill!”

After instacasting the Supergravity Field as well as the nullifying magic on himself and Bebe, Linley charged forward towards Osenno with Bebe by his side in a simultaneous attack. One Linley and two Bebes arrived at the four slower Osenno’s.

The adamantine heavy sword once more chopped down, while at the same time, Bloodviolet chopped through the air as well.

“Bang!” Osenno was knocked flying, and all four of the Osenno’s merged into one. A hint of blood could be seen dribbling from his mouth. He had dodged Linley’s attack, but he wasn’t able to dodge the two Bebes attacks.

Linley didn't hesitate at all, charging directly towards Osenno, but Osenno instantly transformed into four people as well, while at the same time, his body began to emit a large amount of black flame. The ground around him was burnt to nothing, and Linley's Supergravity Field was wiped out as well.

"I didn't expect you to have this sort of technique." Osenno stared angrily at Linley. "However, this technique of yours is useless."

"Useless?"

Linley stood on the ground confidently.

The four Osenno's once more charged forward at high speed, while at virtually the same instant, Linley's surrounding area once more appeared to be covered by that earthen light – Supergravity Field of the seventh rank!

The four Osenno's paused slightly, and then, with a 'Bam!', the black flame began to burn, once more wiping away the Supergravity Field. Osenno's eyes were filled with fury. "It is useless, Linley. My body is fully capable of getting accustomed to this level of Supergravity."

"Bebe, let's do it."

Linley and Bebe both charged towards Osenno, while at the same time, Linley once more cast the Supergravity Field. Only this time... it was a Supergravity Field of the sixth rank!

Osenno had already been prepared for quadruple gravity, but when he suddenly became affected by double gravity instead, his movements couldn't help but falter a bit.

"Bang!"

Profound Truths of the Wind – Tempos of the Wind. Bloodviolet seemed both 'Fast' and 'Slow', and that spatial edge appeared on the edge of Bloodviolet. The edge of the sword chopped down directly towards Osenno, and was actually able to cut through his infernal flames, sending him flying back once again.

A wound had appeared on Osenno's chest.

Osenno had dodged Linley's adamantine heavy sword and the attacks of the

two Bebes, but he had been injured by Bloodviolet.

“How can it be so powerful?” The look on Osenno’s face changed.

Just then, he had nowhere to run. Because all four of his shadows were attacking Linley, Linley naturally attacked two while the other two were easily attacked by the two Bebes, who was faster than them. No matter what, he would end up taking a hit.

He didn’t dare take the adamantine heavy sword head-on, and he didn’t want to take a hit from Bebe’s claws either.

In the end, he had chosen Bloodviolet.

However... that Bloodviolet sword seemed to be even more formidable than Bebe’s claws by a whisker.

“According to our intelligence, the attacks of that violet sword aren’t very powerful though.” Osenno couldn’t believe it.

Indeed, when he dueled with Haydson, Linley’s ‘Tempos of the Wind’ was not too powerful. But now that he had broken through to a higher level of comprehension towards both the ‘Fast’ and the ‘Slow’ aspects of the Elemental Laws of the Wind, then combined them in his ‘Tempos of the Wind’, the power had been raised by far more than just one level; it was raised by at least two levels, or even more.

“Osenno, didn’t you want to kill me?” Linley seemed very arrogant.

Attack!

The demonic-looking Linley and the enlarged Bebe charged wildly towards Osenno. As they did, Linley instacast the Supergravity Field again, filling the area once more with that earthen glow.

“Bang!” In the blink of an eye, Osenno’s infernal black flames once more wiped away the Supergravity Field.

But for Linley, this sort of low-level technique was something he could use a hundred or two hundred times without exhausting his mageforce. And more importantly, Linley had the Coiling Dragon ring and only needed to use a sixth of the mageforce to begin with.

Supergravity Field of the seventh and sixth ranks. Linley was using them on a rotational basis.

“Not good.” The constantly changing gravitational power caused even Osenno’s attacks to become less coordinated.

The Supergravity Field of the sixth rank increased gravity by two times. There was a big difference between it and the Supergravity Field of the seventh rank... these two spells with huge differences in power caused Osenno to constantly be unable to get accustomed to the local gravity. It was as though an ordinary person, when walking, would suddenly feel gravity disappear, and then he would have to walk while weightless. He wouldn’t be used to it.

Same line of reasoning.

Sometimes, Supergravity Fields weren’t necessarily the stronger the better.

With no way to dodge, Osenno was struck viciously again by Bebe’s two claws and was sent flying. With a crunching sound, Osenno’s rib had broken... this time, Osenno didn’t fly into the air, nor did he dare to go closer to the ground. After having learned this lesson, Osenno didn’t dare to get near the ground again as he remained in mid-air.

“I didn’t know that different Supergravity Fields could be used at this level,” Osenno said.

He had been badly hurt.

After being struck by Linley’s adamantine heavy sword and the Bloodviolet sword, he had then been struck twice by Bebe’s claws now.

“Bebe, let’s charge. He’s badly injured and not in great shape.”

Osenno didn’t hesitate at all. His four shadows instantly flew at high speed towards the south, paying no attention to Bebe who was behind him. Perhaps Bebe would be able to catch him, but he could change between the four shadows nonstop. He had no reason to fear Bebe.

But if Linley were to charge over...

Perhaps Osenno would be the one to injure Linley instead. After all, in mid-air, Linley would not be able to utilize the Supergravity Field. His speed would then

be inferior to Osenno's. Wasn't he just asking for trouble if he did that?



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At this time, Barker and his brothers came running out of the city governor's mansion.

"That Osenno escaped." Ankh sighed.

"His Lordship and Bebe beat Osenno so bad he ran away." Gates was excited. The brothers carefully inspected the streets in front of the city governor's manor, and instantly, they were speechless. The bodies of the six Angels had already been frozen into blocks of ice.

Near Linley's position, the ground itself was a full meter lower.

In addition, another meter of earth had been burned by Osenno's infernal flames and destroyed by it. Linley was currently at the end of that depressed patch of land.

"Lord."

"Lord."

Barker and his brothers ran excitedly towards Linley, while Linley transformed back into his human form. With a flip of his hand, he withdrew a robe from his interspatial ring. Bebe landed on Linley's shoulders, and Linley let out a long sigh.

"Lord, we won," Barker exclaimed excitedly. The other four stared at Linley with excitement as well

A hint of laughter was on Linley's face. He stared towards the south. "We didn't truly win. What a pity. The attack power of each strike of my 'Rippling Wind' isn't powerful enough. If it was more powerful... I would be able to hold off Osenno by myself."

The Rippling Wind could instantly create ten million swords.

It was the absolute peak of speed, but each attack wasn't too powerful. If Linley were to use this attack against the four Osenno's, he wouldn't be able to

harm them at all. Instead, he would be the one to be wounded.

“Tempos of the Wind and Rippling Wind are two different concepts. There is no way to merge them. The only thing I can do is infuse the ‘Rippling Wind’ with the insights I have gained into the ‘Fast’ aspect of the Elemental Laws of the Wind. By then, the power of the ‘Rippling Wind’ would increase by another level.”

Linley still remembered Higginson’s sword technique.

It had been so fast that it had distorted and folded space itself, and it carried a terrifying penetrative power.

If Linley was able to reach that level and use his Rippling Wind technique, then the equivalent of countless ‘Illusionary Void Swords’ would attack his opponents. Although the attack of each sword would still be a bit lower, it would be incredibly powerful nonetheless.”

“Me too,” Bebe muttered. “If my Shadowshape Doppelganger Technique could reach the level of splitting into four shadows, I would be able to fight him by myself.”

Barker and his brothers stared at Linley and Bebe, the man and his magical beast. They were speechless.

“Lord, you aren’t even thirty yet. Yet you are so powerful,” Barker finally said loudly.

Linley and Bebe glanced at each other, then laughed.

Good point. One couldn’t be too greedy.

Linley was on the fast track to understanding both the Elemental Laws of the Wind and the Elemental Laws of the Earth. He wasn’t like some people who were bottlenecked or stuck. He should be overjoyed.

“Barker, immediately send people to reclaim the Sherry Duchy. Here in the prefectural city of Sherry, most likely those soldiers won’t face a single bit of resistance.” Linley was quite confident. After that massive battle with the Angels and the battle just now, who in the prefectural city of Sherry would dare to resist?

“Yes, Lord.”

“Per our plans, since we are fighting head on against the Radiant Church, then we will make our affiliations public. Ten days from now, we will openly proclaim to the world that we have founded a duchy, and the name of the duchy... is the Baruch Duchy!” Linley announced.

Barker, Ankh, Hazer, Boone, and Gates all said with respectful excitement, “Yes, Lord.”



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The battle at the prefectural city of Sherry had determined that for now, the Radiant Church was not capable of suppressing Linley. Linley had slaughtered six Four-Winged Angels, and then forced Praetor Osenno to flee. This victory, once announced by Zassler and the others, quickly spread across the entire area.

The morale of Linley’s side was like a rainbow.

The Sherry Duchy no longer had any hint of resistance. It once more returned to Linley’s control.

Blackdirt City. Within a garden.

“Lord Linley, the western Anne Duchy immediately surrendered to us after we said a few threatening words to them. The duchies to the east are a bit more stubborn.” Zassler laughed. Linley’s reputation was extremely useful.

A simple threat had caused an entire duchy to capitulate.

How could they not surrender though? What, would they fight against a Saint? After all, the most powerful combatants in a duchy were usually of the eighth rank only, and very few duchies had warriors of the ninth rank. As for Saints... how could a Saint stay in a duchy?

“Zassler,” Linley instructed. “In three days, I will found the Baruch Duchy. How about this... send some people to one of the branches of the Dawson Conglomerate. Tell them to immediately send a message to Delia in the Yulan

Empire. Tell her about the founding of the Baruch Duchy.”

Zassler assented.

Linley stood there in the garden, staring towards the south. “Delia. I’ve completed my side of our agreement. So... when will you come?”

Homecoming

Osenno's study.

"Lord Praetor?" the golden-haired middle-aged man called out softly. Ever since Osenno had been defeated and sent fleeing by Linley and Bebe, Osenno had become even grimmer and colder. His subordinates didn't even dare to get close to him.

Osenno raised his head, staring at him with those cold eyes.

The middle-aged man squeezed out a smile. "Lord Praetor, how should we deal with Linley?"

"Linley?" Osenno let out a cold sneer.

The middle-aged man's heart quailed. He could sense the temperature in the room drop. Osenno said coldly, "Immediately send someone to deliver the news to the Sacred Isle and inform the Holy Emperor. If Linley is not eradicated... then in the future, if the Radiant Church is eliminated, it would most likely have been done by Linley!"

Osenno was truly frightened by Linley's rate of improvement.

Last year, in August, when Linley dueled with Haydson, Linley's strength was just on par with Haydson. But now, in the following April, in just eight short months... Linley's power had increased by an astonishing amount.

In the past, that violet sword was incapable of harming Haydson. But now, it harmed him. Osenno!

"He... he's not yet thirty!" Osenno's heart was filled with worry.

"Yes, Lord Praetor. I will immediately send someone conveying your words to the Holy Emperor," the middle-aged man hurriedly said.

Osenno sighed in his heart. "If... if in the past, the people we had killed and

sacrificed to the Radiant Sovereign didn't include Linley's mother, then perhaps... perhaps Linley would have become the central pillar for the Radiant Church, capable of helping us overthrow the Cult of Shadows."

But it was too late.

Linley and the Radiant Church were now openly opposed.



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The Anarchic Lands. Currently, there were three primary factions. One was the Radiant Church. One was the Cult of Shadows. And the final one was Linley's. Because of the battle at the prefectural city of Sherry, the Radiant Church was now quite silent and kept its head low.

The Cult of Shadows wouldn't interfere. They wanted to see Linley and the Radiant Church continue to fight against each other. Naturally, they too, would just keep their head low and watch. As long as Linley didn't antagonize them, they definitely wouldn't antagonize Linley.

In this sort of situation.

Linley's side was more vigorous and expanded the most, and was now preparing the festivities for the founding of the Baruch Duchy. Currently, the Baruch Duchy had three prefectural cities, nineteen small cities, and led over twenty million citizens. This sort of large faction was actually about the size of half of a regular kingdom.

This was an extremely large duchy.

And Linley? His legend was once more sung about in songs by the countless masses... his list of myths now included destroying six Four-Winged Angels and defeating the Praetor of the Ecclesiastical Court of the Radiant Church. Linley's fame continued to grow, causing many warriors and magi who worshipped Linley to head to the Baruch Duchy in a wave.

They wanted to fight for Linley!



The imperial capital of the Yulan Empire.

Master Longhaus' residence. Delia was in the courtyard as always, soaking up the rays of the sun and enjoying the fresh air while studying Master Longhaus' notes on magic.

"Miss Delia, the Dawson Conglomerate's representative is here," a guard ran over and reported to her.

Delia's eyes instantly lit up.

"I, Big Yellow, am willing to bet that it is a letter from Linley." The Worldbear next to Delia chortled, while Delia glanced at him sideways.

"Quick, let him come in," Delia said.

"Yes," The guard responded respectfully.

A short while later, a beaming, middle-aged man entered the courtyard. Seeing Delia, he immediately withdrew a letter from his robes. "Miss Delia, here is your letter. It comes from the Anarchic Lands." This wasn't his first time delivering a letter to Delia.

As soon as Delia saw this person, she knew that the letter came from Linley.

"Miss Delia, I bid you farewell." The middle-aged man was extremely polite.

Delia laughed in excitement. After the man left, she immediately opened the letter and began to read. The nearby Worldbear craned his big head over to sneak a peek as well. Delia couldn't help but turn and glance at him. "Big Yellow, I'm getting angry."

The Worldbear immediately let out a couple of deep, awkward chuckles.

Delia laughed as well, then continued to read. But as she did, Delia's body began to tremble.

"Wonderful. Wonderful." Delia was so excited that she immediately rose to her feet. She could feel her heart racing and her entire body was beginning to be covered in sweat.

"Delia, why are you so happy?" the Worldbear asked puzzledly. Even the

nearby Wildthunder Stormhawk stared towards Delia in confusion. Just at this moment, a middle-aged man appeared in the courtyard. It was the wind-style Grand Magus Saint, Master Longhaus.

“Teacher,” Delia said respectfully.

Master Longhaus laughed as he looked at Delia. “Hatton tells me that you received a letter from Linley. It seems there is some joyous occasion?”

Delia stared at the Worldbear, who began to laugh delightedly.

“Teacher.” Delia was still quite excited. “It is Linley’s letter. He tells me... that the Baruch Duchy is going to be founded this year, April 16th. That’s today. Linley is finally founding his duchy. This is... this is wonderful.”

Master Longhaus knew everything there was to know about Delia’s affairs.

“As happy as that? Is it because you’re about to be able to see Linley?” Master Longhaus teased.

Delia’s face had turned red. Was it because she was embarrassed, or was it because she was too excited?

“Alright, Teacher. I can’t talk right now. I have to go home first and tell my parents about this. According to what they previously said, now that Linley has erected his duchy, they shouldn’t be against me and Linley being together anymore,” Delia said.

Master Longhaus nodded.

“Fine. Go.”

Delia repeatedly nodded. She immediately rode the Wildthunder Stormhawk ‘Parry’ and left her teacher’s residence. Watching Delia fly away, Master Longhaus shook his head and sighed. “Delia’s father won’t be so easily swayed, I’m afraid.”



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Within the Leon clan’s residence.

Dylla Leon and his wife were both quite puzzled. Why had Delia pulled them here to this quiet room to discuss something?

“Father, mother, there’s something I need to tell you.” Delia took a deep breath.

Delia’s mother started to laugh. “What sort of joyous event is it, that has you all worked up like this?”

Delia began to laugh as well. “Right. Father, mother, didn’t you say that if Linley and I were together, it would lower his Imperial Majesty’s faith in our clan? But now, Linley has erected his own duchy in the Anarchic Lands.”

“Erected a duchy?” Dylla Leon and his wife looked at each other.

“Delia, my dearest daughter, I hope you aren’t lying to your father. After all, I’ve never heard of this,” Dylla Leon said.

Delia secretly laughed.

Linley’s Baruch Duchy was being founded today. It would take at least ten days or half a month for the news to spread several thousand kilometers away to the Yulan Empire. It would be a strange thing if her father did know about it.

“It is true. I just have some advance information. Linley’s duchy is named the Baruch Duchy,” Delia said with certainty.

Dylla Leon and his wife exchanged glances.

“It’s true. Father, mother, can it be that you don’t believe me?” Delia frowned.

Dylla Leon chuckled while shaking his head. “I believe you. But why must you marry Linley? Although Linley has founded a duchy... can being the wife of a Grand Duke compare to being the Empress of an Empire?”

Delia’s smile froze.

“Father, what are you trying to say?” Delia’s face was more serious than it had ever been.

Dylla Leon stretched his hand out, placing it on Delia’s shoulder. Sighing, he said, “Delia, it is true that Linley is a Saint and is powerful. But Emperor Rande is

the Emperor of our Yulan Empire. If you marry him, that would be wonderful as well. And... it would be very beneficial for our entire clan.”

Delia looked at her father, her eyes filled with disbelief.

“Father. Are you still that father who loved me?” Delia’s voice had turned hoarse.

Dylla Leon was startled, and his wife was taken aback as well.

“Father. I love Linley, love him very much. But this isn’t because he is a Saint. When I met him at the Ernst Institute, I fell in love with him. Was he a Saint back then? Why do you have this sort of idea in your mind about the type of person your daughter is?”

“Also. Ever since returning from the Institute, in the past eight or nine years, why is it that I refused to accept the advances of any young man in the imperial capital? Why? Can it be that you don’t understand?”

Delia truly didn’t know what her parents were thinking.

“Ever since I came back from the O’Brien Empire and told you about Linley, what I wanted was your blessings. But... instead you tried to stop me.” Delia’s eyes were glimmering with tears. “I admit that your words are very logical. Back then, if I was to be with Linley, it would indeed lower Emperor Rande’s trust in our family.”

“Father. Mother. I love you. I love my family. That’s why I didn’t want to put you in a difficult position. Although I wanted to go meet Linley a long time ago, for your sake, I’ve been enduring. I’ve stayed in the imperial capital, because I cherish my family and cherish you.”

“But you try to convince me to marry this person and that person. What is it? Can it be that Linley is inferior to those nobles? Why are you always like this?” In the past seven or eight months, Delia had felt extremely depressed.

“I finally waited for this moment. Linley’s erected his own duchy. I came to you today filled with excitement. I hoped... I hoped I would receive my parents’ blessings. But...” As Delia spoke, her tears began to come out. “You disappoint me. You truly disappoint me.”

Dylla Leon and his wife were silent as they faced their daughter.

“Father. Mother. I love you both very much, and cherish you both very much.” Delia took a deep breath. “If you still love and cherish me, I hope that on the day of my wedding with Linley, I’ll receive your blessings. But if you no longer care about this daughter of yours... then forget it.”

After finishing her words, Delia turned and left.

Dylla Leon and his wife were both somewhat stunned.

Only after their daughter had gone did they come to their senses.

“Delia!” They called out, but Delia was already seated on the back of the Wildthunder Stormhawk and had flown away.



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Delia was mounted on the Wildthunder Stormhawk and looking down at the rapidly shrinking imperial city. She had bid her teacher farewell, and then left the imperial capital. The wind blew against Delia’s golden hair, and also blew her tears dry.

Right now, Delia’s aching heart only longed to see Linley. Only in Linley’s embrace would she find comfort.

The Wildthunder Stormhawk let out a few hawk cries as well, as though comforting Delia.

Slowly... the Wildthunder Stormhawk and Delia disappeared into the northern horizon.



*

Blackdirt City. At the base of Mt. Blackraven.

“Linley is currently training at Mt. Blackraven.” Zassler pointed towards a mountain while laughing. Seeing the beautiful scenery of Mt. Blackraven, Delia managed to clamp down on her excitement. “Mr. Zassler, is Linley always

there?”

Zassler laughed. “Almost his entire time is spent there training. Bebe is there as well.”

As they spoke, they headed up the mountain.

Following that creek, Zassler led Delia to the side of a lake. Delia instantly saw Linley. Right now Linley was dressed in a long, sky blue robe. His long hair was unbound, and he was wielding a violet longsword on the surface of the lake, testing out his sword attacks.

Wherever the violet sword passed, space itself seemed to ripple, making Linley seem indistinct and hazy.

Clearly, Linley was currently immersed in training.

“Ah! Delia. You came. BOSS!!!!!!” Bebe, who had been playing around in the water, immediately saw Delia, and he immediately let out an excited cry.

Linley’s movements came to a halt, and he turned around.

Seeing Delia, Linley seemed to have suffered a blow to his spirit. His entire body froze... but then, he flew over at high speed. As for Delia? A smile had made its way onto her face, and her eyes had instantly turned moist.

Delia, Marry Me!

Linley landed on the side of the lake. Filled with excitement, he stared at Delia, whose eyes were filled with unshed tears. He had the sudden urge to immediately take Delia into his arms. But although he had this urge, he still just stood there in front of Delia, his mouth open, but not knowing what to say.

He had ten million words in his heart, but he couldn't get a single word out.

"Linley, you haven't changed." Delia laughed. She was the one to reach out to him, with her left hand.

Seeing that white, dainty hand, Linley was stunned for a moment. Delia glanced at him out of the corner of her eyes. "Hey, Dumbo, are you going to make me use the Soaring Technique, just so that I can get to the center of the lake?" There was a distance of several dozen meters from here to the center of the lake. If Delia didn't use the Soaring Technique, she wouldn't be able to get there.

Seeing the way Delia was looking at him, and her ivory white arm, Linley immediately reached out with his own right hand and took hers in his own.

"So, uh, Linley. I'll be leaving now," Zassler finally spoke.

Linley and Delia's faces both suddenly flushed pink. Linley turned to glance at Zassler, speechless. Zassler winked towards Linley, then turned and ran away at high speed.

"That's just how Zassler is." Holding hands with Delia, Linley tapped his foot, summoning a wind that swirled around both of them. Gently... Linley and Delia floated to the center of the lake. They stepped onto the edges of the stone platform, then sat down next to each other.

The two continued to hold hands. Feeling the soft warmth of Delia's hand in his own, Linley felt as though he was currently standing in the clouds. Delia's

face was slowly turning pink as well. The atmosphere between the two instantly grew more intimate.

Suddenly...

Linley saw that in the water, not too far away, Bebe had popped his little head out and was using his sneaky little eyes to peek at Linley and Delia.

“Oh! Boss! You guys keep doin’ what you were doing. Bebe’s gonna just go somewhere else to play for a bit. You guys keep on at it!” Bebe, knowing that he had been discovered, immediately sank down into the water. However, Linley and Delia didn’t notice that far away, on top of a tree near the peak of Mt. Blackraven, a Wildthunder Stormhawk was stealthily peeping at them.

“Hehe.” Delia immediately began to giggle. “Linley, Bebe really is adorable.”

Linley nodded and laughed as well. “That’s just how Bebe is. Oh, right. Delia, why is it that you waited so long to come here after you left the O’Brien Empire? Did something happen?” Linley still remembered how, when Delia had left, she said she would soon come find him.

Delia nodded, but she fell silent.

The events that had occurred in the imperial capital had truly hurt Delia. She was very disappointed in her parents. Linley’s words... instantly made Delia feel downcast.

“What happened? Talk to me.” Linley squeezed Delia’s hand.

“You really want to know?” Delia stared at Linley, her face close to his.

Linley nodded.

“If you listen to the story, then you’ll have to marry me,” Delia suddenly said.

“Wha...” This sneak attack truly caught Linley offguard. Delia truly was the only woman Linley was currently interested in, but for him to immediately marry her... Linley, in his heart, was still rather nervous. His first relationship’s failure had caused Linley to be rather defensive in these matters.

He still didn’t dare to completely invest himself in any relationship with a woman.

He was afraid he would be utterly heartbroken once again.

“I’m just joking with you.” Delia began to laugh, then let out a flirtatious sniff. “Sheesh, Linley. Can’t you just pretend or just tease me for a moment?” Delia’s words made Linley feel less awkward.

Delia took a deep breath. “I can tell you the story now, if you still want to hear it?”

Linley immediately nodded.

Delia settled her thoughts. Holding Linley’s hand, staring at the peaceful lake waters, she slowly said, “Linley. When I received my clan’s letter saying that I had to go back, I found, upon my return... my grandmother was perfectly fine. There was nothing wrong with her at all.”

Linley frowned.

When Delia had written him a letter saying that her grandmother was in excellent shape, Linley had already sensed that there was something that lay hidden.

“Afterwards, I found out that my parents found out from my teacher that the reason I stayed behind in the O’Brien Empire was to be together with you. Thus, my parents used this scheme to get me to come back and to part from you.” Delia laughed bitterly as she looked at Linley. “This scheme was a very clumsy one, but I still fell for it.”

Linley was puzzled. “Your parents...”

“It was for the clan.”

Delia sighed. “Before you had started your own side in the Anarchic Lands, virtually everyone in the six major forces believed you were a member of the O’Brien Empire. The O’Brien Empire and the Yulan Empire have always viewed each other as principal rivals.”

Linley understood. The most powerful forces in the Yulan continent were these two Empires.

“In my parents’ opinion, if I were to marry you, then that would be tantamount to colluding and allying with an important Saint of the enemy. The

Emperor of the Yulan Empire would have less trust in our clan. Thus, my father and mother didn't want me to be with you."

Delia glanced at Linley. "Naturally though, this was just my parents' opinion. They didn't know... that we've never discussed marriage."

Linley could only rub his nose.

Delia said falteringly, "The imperial capital is filled with people pursuing me, and my parents kept on trying to persuade me to marry someone else. I wasn't willing! I really hate that! Linley... I really wanted to leave right away and come looking for you, but I didn't want to break the relationship between me and my parents. I really love my parents!"

"I understand," Linley said consolingly.

Of course he understood how Delia was feeling. This was because he, too, was a man who cherished his relatives and his parents.

"I really wanted to come find you, but I didn't want to lose my parents either." Delia chewed on her lips, lowering her voice. Linley could clearly sense that Delia was squeezing his hands more tightly now.

Linley rested Delia's hand on his leg.

Delia glanced at Linley, a hint of a smile appearing on her face. "I was waiting... waiting for you to found your duchy. But my parents said that I should marry the Emperor of the Yulan Empire and become the Empress."

"Hrm?" Linley felt a hint of anger in his heart.

Delia's parents really were going too far.

"I wasn't willing. That time, I got angry with my parents." Delia shook her head helplessly. "I've always been a filial, obedient child in front of my parents. But that time, I really lost my temper. I told my father clearly that I would rather die than marry those people."

Linley felt a grateful feeling in his heart. For a woman to be willing to do this was truly moving.

"I was waiting... and finally, the letter I waited for arrived. You had founded the Baruch Duchy." Delia looked at Linley. "At the time, I was extremely excited.

My parents would no longer block us from being together.” Linley felt extremely happy as well.

As Linley saw it, Delia should have come happily after having a good talk with her parents.

“But when I told this news to my parents... they once again advised me to marry that Emperor.” A bitter look was on Delia’s face.

“How can they be like that?” Linley’s face changed.

For them to act like this... Linley could totally understand how Delia must have felt.

“Right, how can they be like that?” Delia’s eyes had a sad look in them. “I had gone to them happily, but I didn’t expect that this would be the result. Actually... I should’ve predicted it. My father is the leader of our clan. Of course he has to think about things from the clan’s standpoint. In his eyes, the Emperor is very talented and has a high status. Marrying him would also be of benefit to the clan. Marrying His Imperial Majesty truly would have been absolutely perfect. However... he had never considered things from my standpoint.”

Delia took a deep breath. “So. I didn’t spend any more time on vain hopes.”

Delia looked at Linley. “I just came. I didn’t bother with discussing it with my parents. I left the imperial capital and came to find you.”

Seeing the look in Delia’s eyes, Linley, in his heart, had a powerful surge of emotion... he felt moved, saddened, and fulfilled!

“Delia...” Linley wanted to say something, but the words stuck in his throat and wouldn’t come out.

The girl in front of him...

For his sake, she had waited ten years by herself.

For his sake, she could ignore the allure of becoming the Empress.

For him, she even left her beloved parents and journeyed all alone to this place to find him.



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Linley suddenly felt a strong sense of humiliation. He suddenly felt that he really despised himself, really hated himself!

“She’s a girl. She’s sacrificed so much for you, but from start to finish, you’ve never even... you’ve never even given her as much as a promise.” Linley was berating himself mentally.

“What am I waiting for? What do I have to hesitate about?”

He looked into Delia’s eyes. Delia had always made her feelings very clear, and had always been waiting for him... but he had always been hesitating. But today, Linley knew that he could no longer hesitate. He had kept on hesitating for so long...

What he had gained was already extremely precious.

“She gave up everything and waited ten years. And she is still waiting... without any promises from me.” Linley saw the tears in the corner of Delia’s eyes. His heart twitched hard, and he howled at himself, “Do you want to have Delia wait forever? Until the day her heart dies and she leaves by herself?”

Linley felt a stabbing pain in his heart.

“Crunch.”

That layer of ice surrounding Linley’s heart finally shattered and melted away.

Linley didn’t want to wait any longer.

He didn’t want to make himself wait!

And he didn’t want to make Delia wait either!

“Linley, what’s wrong?” Seeing the look on Linley’s face, she couldn’t help but feel concerned.

Linley suddenly stretched out his hand and held Delia by her shoulders. Delia could feel her heart begin to thump. Linley stared at Delia, took a deep breath, then said seriously, “Delia... marry me!”

Delia’s eyes turned as round as the moon as she stared at Linley in shock.

Upon these words coming out, in Linley’s consciousness, a bolt of lightning

flashed past his mind, illuminating every single scene he had shared with Delia. From the very first time they had met at the Ernst Institute and he had seen that adorable girl. Their time spent together as children. That farewell kiss that night at the town of Wushan...

One scene after another.

He felt a warm feeling in his heart.

With a wife like this, what more did he need?

“Linley.” Delia cleared her throat, staring at Linley with wide eyes. “What did you just say? Can you say it again? Please?” Delia’s voice was quavering.

Linley stared at Delia. One word at a time, he said to her, “Delia. Marry me! Marry me, Linley. Be with me forever, and let us never be separated. Alright?” Linley’s voice was trembling as well. Right now, Linley felt very nervous.

Right. Nervous.

Delia looked into Linley’s eyes. Suddenly, her tears came rolling out.

How long had it been?

How long had she waited for this day?

Even when they were children and their affection was rather indistinct, she had hoped for this day to come one day. Hoped that Linley would become her knight in shining armor.

One day after another, she had waited...

That year, she had only been a little girl in her teens. But now, she was already a twenty-eight-year-old lady. Over ten years had passed. Whether it was when Linley and Alice had been together, or when Linley had gone missing for ten years, or when her parents had stopped them from being together, she hadn’t given up.

The only thing she was afraid of was...

Linley abandoning her!

She had always been waiting. She hadn't even dare to force Linley to give her any promises!

“Are you willing?” Seeing Delia’s entire face covered with tears, Linley felt deeply touched and moved.

Delia suddenly threw herself into Linley’s embrace, wrapping her arms around him tightly and saying repeatedly into Linley’s ear, “I’m willing, I’m willing, I’m willing...”

Linley could feel the warmth from Delia’s body. In his heart, he felt more content than he ever had in the past.

Kingdom

Linley could clearly sense how, when he held Alice in his arms when they were young, he had felt happy. But now, when he held Delia in his arms, Linley felt, in the deepest part of his heart, a sort of contentment, a spiritual fulfillment!

This... was true happiness!

The ice covering Linley's heart had totally melted.

Delia's face was covered with smiles. She had never been so happy before.

"Linley. I'm so happy," Delia gently whispered into Linley's arms.

"Me too." Linley gently stroked Delia's fragrant hair and touched her sleek shoulders.

Delia obediently rested herself against Linley's chest. She murmured, "Linley, I feel as though I'm in a dream... tell me, is this real?" That tough woman who could make even an Emperor feel nervous was now as obedient as a child.

"It's real, it's real." Linley could feel the warmth from Delia's body, and a warm, protective feeling arose in his heart.

Delia suddenly raised her head and looked at Linley haltingly. "Linley, if one day, Alice comes to find you, what would you do?" Delia was truly afraid, afraid that Linley would be taken away by someone else.

"Alice?"

Linley's hand paused, but then he continued to stroke Delia's hair. He said comfortingly, "The affection between the two of us ended long ago. I feel neither love nor hatred to her. After all, she can choose who she likes..." Linley stroked Delia's face and chuckled, "Delia, don't overthink things. I'll never leave you. If I abandon you... then I would truly be an utter fool."

“Delia, am I an utter fool?” Linley looked at Delia.

Delia laughed, laughed very happily.

“You are a genius. You are the greatest genius in the Yulan continent.” Delia harrumphed ‘coldly’.

Seeing Delia’s full, bewitching lips, Linley suddenly had an urge... without hesitating at all, Linley lowered his head and planted a kiss on Delia’s lips. Delia seemed to have been struck by lightning, and her body quivered. But then, she sank into the kiss...

This was the second kiss Linley and Delia had shared.

The first was that night at the town of Wushan.

After that, they were a long time apart.

Delia didn’t say anything, just staying in Linley’s embrace. A hint of shyness was still on her face. To Linley, Delia was so utterly mesmerizing right now.

“Ah, hell, I can’t watch any more, I can’t watch any more, I can’t watch any more!!!!” Suddenly, Bebe burst out from underneath the lake water.

Linley and Delia both were startled.

Bebe, in mid-air, laughed openly and honestly. “Uh, sorry, Boss! Sorry, Boss’ Wife! You two can continue.”

“Boss’ Wife?” Linley and Delia couldn’t help but begin to laugh.

“So you were peeking the entire time, Bebe. Tell me, how should I punish you?” Linley guessed by now that Bebe was peeking the entire time, and actually, Bebe had utilized the Shadowshape technique and been hiding within the shadows of the lake.

Linley hadn’t been searching for Bebe with his spiritual energy, so naturally he hadn’t noticed.

“Punish me?” Bebe pondered for a moment. “Oh. Punish me with a lady mouse, one as powerful as me. I’m very lonely right now.” Bebe put on a very pitiable look.

Linley and Delia couldn’t help but both begin to laugh.

“Unfortunately, I am an extremely, unnaturally gifted mouse that might appear once in a thousand years.” Bebe sighed, then tittered, “Boss, Boss’ Wife... when are you getting married? I’m getting impatient for you.”

“Get married?”

Linley looked at Delia. It was indeed time to discuss this issue.



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The governor’s manor. Blackdirt City.

When Barker and the others saw Linley and Delia holding hands and walk in together in such an intimate manner, all of them were stunned. Zassler was the first to recover and intentionally said in a loud voice, “Lord Linley, what’s going on between you and Ms. Delia?”

Because of Linley’s status, when they were in front of other people, Zassler addressed Linley as ‘Lord’ Linley.

“Delia and I are getting married.” Linley smiled.

This news had the effect of a forbidden-level magical spell, instantly causing everyone present to explode with sound.

“Wow! Getting married?” Gates was the first to shout.

“Whoaaaah! Ms. Delia, you and Lord Linley are getting married? Wonderful!” Rebecca jumped up in excitement as well. The entire hall instantly became a pandemonium of excitement. There was only a single person whose smile was rather forced. Jenne. In recent days, Jenne had immersed herself in managing the affairs of the duchy.

She hadn’t expected to suddenly receive this sort of news.

But of course... Jenne had expected that this day would come, long ago.

There was nothing that Linley kept from Delia, and she knew of the history between Jenne and Linley. Smiling, Delia walked over to Jenne, then took Jenne’s hands in her own in an extremely warm manner. “Jenne, when Linley and I are getting married, you come be my bridesmaid, alright?”

Looking at the smile on Delia's face, Jenne nodded.

Delia immediately pulled Jenne into a friendly manner off to one side and began chatting with her.

Linley walked towards Barker, Zassler, and the others. "Delia and I have already come to a decision. We will directly host a wedding ceremony. The day of the wedding will be three months later, on July 2nd." Linley laughed as he looked at Barker. "Barker, I think... in the next three months, it would be good if we can take over the nearby duchies and found a kingdom before three months are up. Can you do this?"

Linley wanted his wedding with Delia to be an exciting affair.

But three months, in Linley's opinion, seemed to be rather short.

"Three months? No need." Barker was extremely confident. "One month is enough."

"A month?" Linley was puzzled. "It would be hard to just organize and drill the troops in a month, and we'd have to also reorganize the conquered duchies. That's all rather troublesome. How can you take them over in a month?"

Gates laughed loudly. "Lord, there's something you aren't aware of. Please take a look." Gates walked to a military map that had been hung up on a wall. "Lord, take a good look at the current disposition of forces in the Anarchic Lands. These twenty-plus duchies all belong to the Radiant Church, while these all belong to the Cult of Shadows. But these... these are unaligned."

Linley immediately understood.

This power distribution was quite strange.

The Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows both controlled duchies in the center of the Anarchic Lands as well as in the south. They occupied more than half of the Anarchic Lands. Only the northernmost areas next to the Forest of Darkness were unaligned.

The Anarchic Lands were rectangular in shape. If you were to divide it into four equal quarters, then the northernmost portion was the portion closest to the Forest of Darkness.

Neither the Radiant Church nor the Cult of Shadows wanted that area!

“Lord, our Baruch Duchy is located near the Forest of Darkness,” Barker explained.

“Oh. In the past, I never paid attention to this.” Linley stared carefully at the military map. “The Cult of Shadows and the Radiant Church have taken over half of the Anarchic Lands. But why is it that they don’t want the northernmost area that is located close to the Forest of Darkness?”

The Baruch Duchy, after all, had been set up close to the north.

“Lord Linley.” Zassler walked over, laughing. “This is why we say that we can easily unify the area in a short time.”

“Oh?” Linley looked at Zassler with a questioning glance. “Is it because it belongs to neither side, which makes it easier to unify?”

Zassler explained, laughing, “That’s not what I mean. I mean, aside from our own duchy, most likely more than half of those seven other duchies near the Forest of Darkness would be willing to directly surrender to us.”

“More than half would surrender to us?” Linley didn’t understand. “Can it be that they feel pressured by our power?”

Zassler explained, “Lord Linley. Have you forgotten that every few decades or every decade, there will be a massive wave of magical beasts from the Forest of Darkness? Each wave of magical beasts first attacks the border duchies closest to the Forest of Darkness, and thus the battles rage on the most in these duchies as well.”

Linley instantly understood.

“Are you saying that these duchies...”

“Right. These duchies are the poorest duchies in the Anarchic Lands and the most pitiable ones as well.” Zassler sighed. “The Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows are both uninterested in unifying it, because... resisting the magical monster waves costs too much gold, far more than these duchies can generate.”

Linley now fully understood.

This was a barren wasteland!

Unifying this region meant that one would have to struggle against the countless magical beasts in the Forest of Darkness. Linley could definitely imagine how brutal those battles would be... each time, most likely over a million people would die, or even more.

“Linley, of the seven duchies here, aside from a few who don’t want to surrender, the rest all deeply desire to have a strong base of support. And you, Lord... are a Saint and would make an excellent, powerful support.” Zassler laughed. “Not just them. Even the commoners wish for you to lead and unify them. That way, they would be safer.”

Barker laughed. “And Lord, even now, there have been at least three duchies who sent people to come and negotiate the terms of their surrender. Only, because their territories are not immediately adjacent to ours, we need to first take over the duchies east of us.”

Linley nodded. “Since that’s the case, then do it as quickly as possible.”

Gates slapped his chest and boasted, “Lord, a month from now, a full quarter of the Anarchic Lands will be under your control. Of course... this is the poorest quarter in the Anarchic Lands, but at the same time, it is the most militant and ferocious quarter.”

Linley nodded. “Zassler, make the arrangements. Have my wedding invitation letters be sent to these people. I’ll send the list of names to you in a while.”

“Yes, Lord Linley,” Zassler acknowledged, and then laughed. “Then are you planning to openly announce the news of your marriage?”

Linley looked towards the side at Delia and Jenne who were happily chatting. Linley had a desire; no matter what, he would definitely have to make Delia happy.

“Publicize it! I want the day of the founding of the Baruch Kingdom to be the day of my grand wedding!” Linley said heroically.

Clearly, this meant that a month from now, they would unify their quarter of the Anarchic Lands under their banner, while three months from now... the Baruch Kingdom would be founded and the wedding would also be held. From a

territorial standpoint, controlling a quarter of the Anarchic Lands meant controlling quite a large swathe of territory.

The size of it was significantly larger than the former Kingdom of Fenlai.

In population alone, there was roughly a hundred million citizens.



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A lonely island in the oceans. The most core area of the Radiant Church – the Sacred Isle. It received news from the Anarchic Lands.

On the ninth floor of the Radiant Temple. Heidens was reading this letter.

“When Linley and his magical beast combined forces, they were able to force Osenno to retreat?” Staring at this letter, Heidens felt as though he had been stricken heavily. Osenno’s power was unquestionable. Especially his ‘Doppelganger Technique’, which let him divide into four. It was incredibly terrifying.

Even Haydson probably would have been badly injured and then killed by Osenno.

After all, it was simply too hard to block the ‘Doppelganger technique’.

“Osenno speaks the truth.” Heidens’ heart tightened. “If this continues, then...”

The Radiant Church didn’t fear Linley.

But Linley wasn’t alone. He had that mysterious, godlike magical beast, Bebe. He also had five Undying Warriors... and his little brother.”

“In the future, when Linley reaches the Saint-level in his human form and the five brothers also reach the Saint-level in human form, and when Linley’s little brother reaches the Saint-level in his human form... that means they have seven peak-stage Supreme Warriors. If you add in that magical beast rodent which is not one bit inferior to Supreme Warriors... that means they will have eight!”

Every single peak-stage Supreme Warrior was capable of being described as the most powerful of Saints.

Seven Supreme Warriors and the magical beast Bebe, if they were to attack the Sacred Isle en masse... Heidens could only imagine the scene. The Radiant Church would be in a battle for its very life, and in the end, it would probably perish.

“Unacceptable. Linley must die.”

Heidens turned to look at Cardinal Guillermo. He ordered, “Guillermo, go invite Commander Lehman, quickly!”

“Commander Lehman?” Guillermo was shocked.

In the Radiant Church, the most powerful person was the Holy Emperor, Heidens. The most frighteningly mysterious person was Osenno. The most admirable and most respected person was the spiritual leader of the Ascetics, Lord Fallen Leaf. But the person who caused the most dread... was the legendary Commander of the Zealots: Lehman!

The Zealots all possessed a unique power.

“Why are you hesitating? Quick, go!” Heidens rebuked.

Heidens didn't dare to hesitate any longer. He had to send a man whose power was no lower than that of Osenno's; Commander Lehman. If the two joined forces... then it would be surprising, indeed, if they were still unable to overcome Linley!

A Procession of Arrivals

One of the prefectural cities in the northern part of the Anarchic Lands. Ankh, Gates, and Boone each wielded their massive long-handled greataxes, standing atop the city walls like wargods. Corpses littered the ground around them, and fresh blood stained the walls and the ground below the walls.

The nearby soldiers were all terrified.

They didn't dare to fight back anymore. All of them put down their weapons.

"Of the seven duchies, five duchies have voluntarily surrendered. The previous duchy was easily taken over. You are the last one." Gates grabbed the leader of the town guards, his furious, ox-like eyes staring into the terrified, quivering leader. "Motherfucker, why fight back when you don't have the power to? Isn't that the same as just ordering your soldiers to commit suicide? Eh?!"

It was indeed tantamount to suicide.

The two sides were on completely different levels of power. Gates and the other two had killed a huge number of the enemies by themselves.

Hoisted high into the air, the captain of the guards said in terror, "Lord, this has nothing to do with me. It was the orders of the Grand Duke."

"Fifth Brother." Ankh laughed. "Enough. Let's go down. Big Brother and the others are all down below. Most likely, they are already drinking celebratory wine. After having taken over this prefectural city, when we add it to the five that surrendered and the one we just took over, that means we have finished our mission!"

Gates and Boone both began to laugh loudly.

In twenty short days, all of the eight duchies that bordered the Forest of Darkness had been reformed into a kingdom; the Baruch Kingdom. The Baruch

Kingdom had over a hundred million people under its rule and took up a quarter of the Anarchic Lands.

Although the people here were poor, they were very violent and ferocious.

In the richer areas of the Anarchic Lands, the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows still remained in control. From this point onwards... the Anarchic Lands had been divided into three major spheres of influence.



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The number one genius in the history of the Yulan continent, Linley, was going to hold a wedding with Ms. Delia of the Leon clan of the Yulan Empire! The day of this wedding was going to be the same day the Baruch Kingdom was formally established.

Time: Yulan calendar, year 10010 - July 21st.

Place: The future capital of the Baruch Kingdom – Baruch City (currently known as Blackdirt City, being rebuilt).

This news quickly swept throughout the Anarchic Lands like a tornado, and at the same time, it was made public to the various powers in the entire Yulan continent. One letter of invitation after another was sent to the various locations of the Yulan continent... countless eyes were focused now on the Anarchic Lands.

The imperial capital of the Yulan Empire. The Leon clan's main hall.

In terms of status, the person with the highest status in the Leon clan wasn't the clan leader, Dylla Leon. It was Dixie Leon!

First of all, Dixie would be the next clan leader. But more importantly... he was the personal disciple of the supporting pillar of the Yulan Empire, the High Priest. The High Priest was one of the most powerful entities in human society. In the hearts of the countless masses, perhaps only the War God could compare to the High Priest.

An astonishingly powerful expert who had wielded the power of the Deities

before the Yulan calendar had even started. The vast majority of the people the High Priest accepted as a personal disciple ended up becoming Grand Magus Saints!

The personal disciple of the High Priest, and a future Grand Magus Saint! And a dual-element Grand Magus Saint at that!

Dylla Leon was currently frowning as he handed the letter of invitation to his son, Dixie.

His back was ramrod straight, and his golden hair was long and unbound. He had an aura of icily keeping all comers at arm's length. This was just the way he was. Dixie. After reading the letter, however, a rare smile actually touched his lips. "Linley didn't disappoint my little sister after all."

"Dixie, what do you think we should do?" Dylla Leon asked.

Dixie glanced at his father, then frowned. "What do you mean, what we should do? My little sister has finally gotten the happiness she has been pursuing for over ten years. Of course we need to celebrate."

Dylla Leon and his wife hesitated just a moment.

"Father, Mother, I know what you two were scheming," Dixie said calmly. "You must allow your vision to expand beyond the limits of mortal, worldly power. The true controllers of the destiny of the Yulan continent... are still the likes of the War God, the High Priest, and the various Saints."

Dixie had to admit that his parents were rather short-sighted.

"Dixie, my beloved son, no matter how powerful Linley is, how can he possibly influence the Yulan empire?" Dylla sighed. "After all, the root of our clan lies in the Yulan Empire."

Dixie glanced at his father. "Father, I must tell you something. You underestimate Linley."

"Oh? How so?" Dylla Leon was a bit puzzled.

Dixie said seriously, "Actually, this time before I returned, Master gave me an order."

"Master? Ah!!! The High Priest!" Dylla Leon's eyes instantly turned round.

Good heavens. Ordinary people like them might never meet the High Priest in their entire lives. But now, the High Priest had personally issued an order to their son.

They suddenly felt honored and glorious beyond compare.

“The High Priest instructed me and two of my fellow apprentices to go to the Anarchic Lands and be his representatives in congratulating Linley,” Dixie said seriously.

Dixie didn’t understand it either. Why did someone at the level of the High Priest need to express such friendliness towards Linley? Especially since Dixie knew... the War God and the High Priest were on opposing sides. Linley was on good terms with the War God. Logically speaking, the High Priest should be on bad terms with Linley.

But it seemed...

The High Priest actually wished to express friendliness towards Linley.

“The waters of the Yulan continent are deep indeed.” Dixie sighed to himself.

The imperial capital of the Yulan Empire. The Walsh clan.

“Milord, this is the letter of invitation from Master Linley, from the Anarchic Lands.” The housekeeper respectfully handed a letter to George. By this point in time, George had already been appointed the successor to the clan leader position by the Walsh clan.

George accepted the letter.

“Haha... Third Bro, Third Bro. I didn’t expect that you’d end up with Delia after all.” George began laughing loudly as he read the letter.

“The world plays jokes on us all.” George still remembered how, when they had first entered the Ernst Institute, Delia would often go looking for Linley. But when George had seen Alice and Linley start to date, he had thought that Linley and Delia would never work out.

Unexpectedly, in the end, after ten years, the circle was completed.

Linley and Delia had gotten together.

The leaders of all the organizations in the Yulan continent that either had some relationship with Linley or were extremely powerful all received letters of invitation. After all, this wasn't just a wedding ceremony. It was also the founding of a kingdom. Naturally, they had to invite the leaders of the various organizations.

Ever since Linley had entered the City of Blackdirt, Blackdirt had begun to engage in a construction boom. By now, Blackdirt City, despite being territorially small, was extremely exquisite and lavish. Even the region outside Blackdirt City was beginning to engage in large-scale construction.

Linley had invited many guests. Amongst the first group to arrive in Blackdirt City was Wharton, Nina, Uncle Hillman, and Grandpa Hiri.

In the governor's mansion. A scene of excitement and joy.

"Big Brother, Nina and I have decided that from today onwards, we won't be leaving. We'll be staying here at your place." Wharton laughed loudly. "Big Brother, you've worked so hard to establish your own realm. How can we live a life of luxury and comfort in the imperial capital? We're embarrassed to do so!"

Linley was secretly overjoyed.

He didn't actually have much free time to manage the kingdom. Most of his time was spent training.

"Wharton, I've been waiting a long time to hear you say these words." Linley laughed.

Linley suddenly stared towards Nina's stomach, then looked at Wharton with suspicion. "Wharton, it seems Nina's stomach has gotten a bit bigger. Can it be that..."

Nina and Wharton exchanged glances, then began to laugh. The nearby Uncle Hillman laughed as well. "Linley, you truly are a Saint-level expert. Your perception is truly amazing. Right. Princess Nina is already pregnant. Linley, you've fallen a bit behind in this area. In the future, you and Delia need to work hard."

Linley and Delia didn't know whether to laugh or to cry.

“Sister Nina, have you decided on a name for the child yet?” Delia asked.

Nina nodded. “I have. Whether it is a boy or a girl, we are going to name it Cena.”

“Cena.” Linley looked at his little brother Wharton. “Does this have some sort of special meaning?” Wharton immediately began to laugh loudly, exchanging a knowing glance with Nina. Then he said secretively towards Linley, “This is a secret between me and Nina. I can’t tell you.”

Linley clapped his hands to his head. “What? You are keeping secrets from me, your Big Brother?”

Everyone in the hall laughed joyously. Halfway through the event, Linley secretly pulled Wharton into a nearby flower garden, and the two siblings took a private walk.

“Big Brother, what is it?” Wharton waited for them to enter the garden before asking.

Linley looked at his little brother. Probingly, he asked, “Wharton, I’ve always been hoping that you would decide to come here and live with me. Now that you are here, I truly am happy. But... is Nina truly happy about it as well, in her heart? Don’t make her do something she doesn’t want to do.”

Wharton nodded. “Big Brother, Nina had a long talk with me. She decided to come with me, and in the future, when she has some free time, she’ll occasionally go back for a visit.”

“That’s the only way, I suppose.”

Linley laughed as he looked at Wharton. “Wharton, after the Baruch Kingdom is formally founded and Delia and I are married, I intend to directly coronate you as the King of the Baruch Kingdom.” Linley was telling his little brother in advance, so as to mentally prepare him.

Wharton was stunned. “King?”

“I’ve already named the kingdom ‘Baruch’. Naturally, it must be ruled over by the heirs of the Baruch clan.” Linley had made this decision a long time ago.

Wharton didn’t decline. “Fine, then. I’m currently only a warrior of the eighth

rank. It should be twenty or thirty years before my human form reaches the Saint level. Right now, there's not much of a point to training to gain a higher level of understanding. When I reach that level, I'll pass the throne down to my son, or perhaps your son, Big Brother." Linley understood what Wharton was thinking; Wharton would need to spend time training after all.

But training in understanding the Laws was something that required someone to be in harmony with and able to clearly sense nature, and to sense the various movements of the elemental essences. That required an extremely high level of elemental essence affinity. Generally speaking, magi had high levels of elemental essence affinity, but the same was not true for warriors. Their elemental essence affinity was not as high.

The same was true for Wharton. Right now, he virtually couldn't sense nature at all. Thus, it would be extremely hard for him to gain any insights on the Laws.

But upon reaching the Saint level, things would change.

Upon reaching the Saint level, one would have a much greater level of ability to sense the surrounding elements. Saints could clearly sense the elements and quickly increase their level of insight! This was the same reason why it was so hard for one to advance from being a warrior of the ninth rank to the Saint-level. Only a small number of warriors of the ninth rank had a high elemental essence affinity.

However, Supreme Warriors didn't need any particular level of insight. So long as they could train their battle-qi to a certain level, they would naturally reach the Saint level.

After spending three days in the City of Blackdirt, Linley and Delia left the city and returned to Mt. Blackraven and began a life of quiet training. As for Bebe, whenever he got bored, Bebe and Haeru would go around the Forest of Darkness, slaughtering magical beasts.



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The light blue skies had a dark streak of light and a white streak of light

flashing through it at high speed, heading in the direction of Blackdirt City in the Anarchic Lands.

The black streak of light was Osenno.

Today, Osenno was dressed in a long black robe with golden threads interwoven into it. His devilish purple hair flowed freely in the wind. By his side was a powerful middle-aged man dressed in a loose, long white robe. This powerful middle-aged man's body was an astonishing 2.5 meters tall.

A height of 2.5 meters was virtually unheard of in humans.

His long white robes fluttered in the wind, and his short green hair gleamed like steel needles. His face seemed to have been carved from stone, but there was an extremely faint seal located in the center of his forehead. The seal of a white flame. His body emanated an oppressive, heart-shaking aura.

This person was the Commander of the Zealots. Lord Lehman.

The two flew together, side by side, as Osenno constantly explained about Linley and Bebe's combat tactics and abilities to Lehman. "That's everything. Lehman, by now, you should have a good sense of the situation, right? How confident are you?"

Lehman glanced at him, his eyes flashing with light. His deep voice echoed forth from his massive chest, "Osenno, that man and his magical beast are inferior to you in strength, but you were still defeated by them. However, that isn't surprising; your single-target attacks are not that strong. What you mainly rely on is the bizarreness of your Doppelganger Technique. As for me... I can kill both of them by myself."

Osenno understood, as well, that his single-target attacks were relatively weak.

But for Lehman, it was the opposite; his forte was in single-target attacks.

"Blackdirt City is up ahead." Osenno pointed at the city below them. "Next to it is Mt. Blackraven. According to my intelligence, Linley spends virtually all of his time there at Mt. Blackraven. We should head directly to Mt. Blackraven."

Lehman focused his gaze on Mt. Blackraven below them.

Instantly, the two charged down towards Mt. Blackraven.

The Laws of Light

Osenno and Lehman flew at high speed towards Mt. Blackraven, while at the same time, they spread their spiritual energy to encapsulate the entirety of Mt. Blackraven.

“Linley is at Mt. Blackraven. He’s the one wearing blue!” Osenno immediately said.

“Got it.”

Lehman’s eyes were flashing with light, and at the same time, the energy in his body began to be roused. In Lehman’s hands, a three-meter-long longstaff suddenly appeared. Although it was a ‘longstaff’ to him, to an ordinary person, a better word would be ‘tree branch’. However, given Lehman’s size and 2.5-meter-height, his massive hands could fully wrap around the thick ‘longstaff’, which had various mysterious runes carved onto it.

“That rat-type magical beast isn’t there, but there are two other Saints present, along with an ordinary woman. Could that be Delia?” Osenno was rather puzzled.

But for now, there was no need for them to over-think things.

“Boom.” It was as though a bolt of lightning had blasted down. Lehman, staff in hand, charged down at high speed. He ignored all others, focusing on his target: Linley.

Linley and Delia were currently entertaining guests. Desri, and his wife! Desri and his wife had just gone to the Frost Goddess Shrine, and on the way back, they came to visit Linley and to offer him their congratulations. Just as the two couples were chatting happily...

A terrifying surge of power descended from the heavens. The target: Linley!

“Out of the way!” Linley’s face changed, and he immediately pushed Delia

aside. A surge of wind suddenly surrounded Delia, while Linley himself immediately transformed into the Dragonblood Warrior form. His sky-blue robe was directly shredded into pieces, and the adamantine heavy sword appeared in his hands.

A silver longstaff that carried boundless force with it had already appeared in front of his eyes.

“Whoosh!”

The air itself rippled and folded, as though space itself was being ripped apart. The silver longstaff smashed directly towards Linley, who sensed that he was facing a greater danger than he ever had before. He could sense that he had been completely locked down, with the surrounding space applying pressure on him.

“Linley.” Delia, who had been pushed to the side, stared at him with eyes filled with terror.

But just at this moment...

A milk-white, gentle light appeared in front of Linley, appearing like a white silk cloth. That silver longstaff, which seemed to contain enough force to obliterate the entire Mt. Blackraven, smashed against the milk-white light and the white ‘silk cloth’ formed from energy.

The white silk cloth only caved in slightly, and the longstaff could no longer push any further.

But the longstaff wielding Lehman felt the rebound force, which sent him flying backwards before landing a hundred meters away. Osenno also landed by Lehman’s side, staring at Desri in astonishment. He knew that it was this person who had blocked Lehman.

“Who are you?” Osenno spoke.

“Osenno, it’s you!” Linley’s face became grim. Delia ran over to Linley’s side. She was extremely worried.

Right now, Linley and Desri were in the center of the lake, while Lehman and Osenno were on the shore. The two sides stared at each other across the water.

“The Radiant Church’s forces?” Desri frowned.

Linley was secretly startled. “Desri used to belong to the Radiant Church. He wouldn’t still feel a degree of nostalgia for them, would he?” At the same time, Linley immediately spoke mentally to Bebe, “Bebe, stop messing around in the Forest of Darkness. Come back, quick. The Radiant Church’s forces have come knocking.”

“Boss, I’ll come back at top speed,” Bebe immediately replied.

Linley carefully looked at Osenno and Lehman, especially Lehman, whose 2.5-meter-tall frame was terrifying to behold and gave Linley a forboding feeling. “Just then, the one who attacked me was the big guy. That big guy is definitely not one bit weaker than Osenno.”

“Delia, make sure you protect yourself,” Linley whispered to Delia by his side.

Delia didn’t dare to make a sound. She didn’t want to distract Linley.

“Who are you?” Osenno stared at Desri. “This is the private affair between Linley and the Radiant Church. I hope you won’t interfere. It seems that you, too, are a practitioner of the Elemental Laws of Light... today, if you step aside, it would be considered giving the Radiant Church face. In the future, we will definitely repay it.”

The proud and arrogant Lehman didn’t say a sound.

The technique that Desri had used just then had let Lehman know exactly how much of a threat this man was.

“My name is... Desri,” Desri finally spoke.

“Desri, it’s you?” Osenno and Lehman’s faces both changed dramatically.

Desri was a legendary figure within the Radiant Church. Long ago, the legendary Holy Emperor Ernst founded the Holy Union. In that era, Desri was the spiritual leader of the Ascetics of the Radiant Church.

His position was equivalent to the status of the current Lord Fallen Leaf.

Osenno and Lehman exchanged glances. They both could sense the terror in each other’s heart. They were facing a Saint from the era of the legendary Holy Emperor Ernst. From then to now, one could simply imagine how much more

powerful the person had grown.

“Lord Desri, I hope that you will consider the former affection and relationship between our two parties and not get involved in this matter,” Osenno said sincerely.

“Hrmph. In your dreams,” an ice cold voice rang out from behind. It was the nearby Pennslyn.

Pennslyn gave Linley a ‘no need to worry’ look. Hearing Pennslyn’s words, the formerly nervous Linley felt a sense of gratitude. But Linley still turned to look at Desri... after all, the decision maker here was Desri.

“What are you thinking about?” Pennslyn said angrily as she saw that Desri was hesitating. As far as Pennslyn was concerned, there was nothing to hesitate over.

Delia began to grow nervous as well. She looked at Desri with concern.

“Lord Desri, can it be that you’ve forgotten the kindness that Lord Ernst showed you in the past?” Osenno hurriedly said. Desri hesitated for a while, but then sighed and said, “I won’t allow you to kill Linley. You can leave, now.”

Desri did indeed feel some degree of affection for the Radiant Church.

Especially Ernst. In the past, the two had been as close as real brothers.

“Lord Desri!” Osenno said frantically. “This Linley killed six Angels and shows no mercy to our Radiant Church at all. If he is allowed to develop, especially alongside those five Undying Warriors, the threat he will pose to our Church is simply too great. Can it be, Lord Desri, that you are just going to watch as the Church is destroyed by him?”

Desri frowned.

“I told you to leave,” Desri’s voice turned heavy.

Osenno and Lehman glanced at each other. They had already made a decision.

Lehman stared at Desri and said loudly, “Desri, since you are going to be like this, we don’t have any choice either.” They now addressed Desri directly by his name. Lehman’s body suddenly began to glow with a white fire, and a terrifying

surge of power began to emanate from him, turning the grass nearby into nothingness.

The silver longstaff in his hands flashed like a bolt of lightning.

“Zealot?” Desri chuckled calmly.

Osenno’s body began to emanate with that black fire, and his body transformed into four Osenno’s. “Lehman, I’ll deal with this Desri. I’ll hand Linley to you.” Osenno felt that although he was weaker than Desri, by using his doppelgangers, he should be able to hold down Desri without too much trouble.

“Madame Pennslyn, I entrust Delia to you,” Linley whispered.

“Don’t worry.” Pennslyn immediately pulled Delia away. Delia didn’t say anything, just giving Linley a meaningful look. Linley felt his heart swell with the desire to do battle: “No matter what, for Delia’s sake, I can’t die.”

Linley immediately stared coldly at Lehman.

“So what if your attack is powerful? Can you kill me with one blow from your staff?” Linley’s body began to be surrounded by that roiling azurish-black energy. “My Pulseguard Defense has already reached 152 layers. With my draconic scales protecting me as well... kill me in one blow? In his dreams!” Linley felt confident in his heart.

His Profound Truths of the Earth was nothing to laugh at. “At this time, I have to use my last, fallback technique.” Linley’s left hand gripped Bloodviolet. At the critical juncture, he would have to utilize the terrifying baleful aura held within Bloodviolet.

“Boom!” A terrifying sonic boom could be heard as Lehman charged forward.

At the same time, the four Osenno’s also emitted sonic booms as he charged forward to try and entangle Desri. Because of his sudden acceleration, the nearby wind began to howl, and stones were actually blown loose from Linley’s stone house and were knocked far away, while the water of the lake began to rise in waves.

“How laughable!”

A clear sound rang out from Desri's mouth. Desri simply stood there in mid-air, while his entire body began to emanate a dazzling white light. Instantly... Desri transformed into the sun, and lines of white light shot towards all four of the Osenos as well as Lehman.

No matter how fast someone was, they couldn't be faster than light.

The four Osenos and Lehman were all struck instantly by those beams of white light. All four Osenos shuddered, and three of them instantly collapsed, while the last one blazed with that black fire, using it to resist the white light.

"Ah!" Lehman let out a furious howl, and the seal of white fire on his forehead instantly lit up.

"Bang!" Lehman actually smashed straight through Desri's protective barrier with his silver longstaff. Desri was extremely shocked. Before he had the chance to let out a second attack, Linley and Lehman exchanged blows.

After having broken through Desri's first barrier, Lehman saw a pair of cold, dark golden eyes and a dark blue heavy sword. Lehman was startled. "It's Linley!" Not hesitating at all, he swung his longstaff down and smashed it hard against Linley.

Linley didn't hold anything in reserve either, attacking simultaneously with his adamantite heavy sword and his Bloodviolet longsword.

"Die!" Lehman howled with rage, a fierce look on his face. The seal of a white flame on his forehead became even brighter, and the silver longstaff in his hands seemed to have created ripples in space as it smashed down against Linley with terrifying force.

Linley instantly activated the 'baleful aura' hidden within Bloodviolet.

Linley's dark golden eyes suddenly contained a hint of red, and his consciousness immediately became filled with that familiar scene... the boundless sea of blood, with skeletons and corpses of various species littering the place. Corpses of ten-meter-tall giants covered with scales and two horns on their forehead. White skeletons that had a hint of strange gold tint...

All of the corpses and skeletons had the aura of at least a Saint, and some were even more terrifying.

“Ah!” Lehman suddenly let out a wild howl.

That terrifying baleful force penetrated his consciousness. That baleful aura that belonged to an incomprehensibly powerful expert caused even the likes of Lehman to quail in fear. Even the white flame seal on his forehead shook, and the longstaff in his hands naturally weakened.

“Bang!”

The silver longstaff and the adamantine heavy sword clashed.

Profound Truths of the Earth – 152 Layered Waves!

Linley’s adamantine heavy sword was smashed so hard, it was knocked back towards his own body. When that terrifying force struck his Pulseguard Defense, the energy of the defense immediately sprang up, but a terrifying power which he had never before experienced was still able to break through the defense.

Linley was knocked back flying...

“Linley.” The distant Delia grew frantic.

With a somersault, Linley landed on the edges of the lake. He flashed Delia a smile. “Don’t worry. I’m fine.” As he spoke, Linley forced down the blood that had risen to his throat. Seeing the shattered draconic scales on his chest, Linley couldn’t help but be secretly startled.

If just then, he hadn’t used the Bloodviolet longsword, he probably would’ve been deeply injured and collapsed.

Lehman was still standing in mid-air, a hint of blood leaking from his mouth. His gaze was clear now.

“Bastard.” Lehman let out a furious howl, once more smashing down against Linley with his silver longstaff.

“Hrmph.”

A cold sneer could be heard, and a translucent ripple that could be seen by the naked eye emanated forth from Desri’s body. In the blink of an eye, it struck against Lehman. Lehman’s massive body trembled, and then collapsed down from the skies. “Splash!” He sank directly into the lake.

“The two of you, don’t force my hand!” Desri’s face had turned grim.

The Four-Sided Gathering

“Such powerful spiritual energy. He is able to cause injuries from a distance with it. Lehman wasn’t able to resist at all.” Linley was utterly shocked. “No wonder the War God said that Desri and Fain are two of the five Prime Saints who were at the doorway to becoming a Deity. They only need to take that last step! They are simply too strong.”

Osenno no longer dared to move. His heart, too, was filled with terror.

“Burst.” A human figure charged up through the water. It was Lehman. Lehman, at this point, obediently flew to Osenno’s side. His face was exceedingly pale, and he stared at Desri with a hint of dread in his eyes.

Desri looked at these two men with furrowed brows. “You know that in the past, I was the leader of the Ascetics. You should also know that I am a Grand Magus Saint.”

Osenno and Lehman exchanged glances.

Grand Magus Saints specialized in powerful spiritual energy, especially this sort of expert like Desri, who had trained for millennia. When using his spiritual energy, he was on a far higher level than his good friend Hayward. In terms of spiritual energy or in understanding the Elemental Laws of Light, Desri was at the absolute limit of power a Saint could reach.

With one more step, he would become a Deity.

“Lord Desri.” Osenno once more addressed Desri as ‘Lord’.

Osenno still remember the information regarding Desri in the scrolls of the Radiant Church. He knew that Desri had been on extremely close terms with the legendary Holy Emperor Ernst.

“Lord Ernst worked all his life to raise up the Radiant Church. He founded the Holy Union. He let the Radiant Church rise to glory! These five thousand years,

we have never given up and never stopped working hard.” Osenno’s voice was very low.

Desri frowned.

In his heart, he didn’t feel much affection for the Radiant Church. But, he felt a great deal of guilt towards Ernst. Ernst was like an older brother to him! His older brother had indeed labored on behalf of the Radiant Church his entire life, and in the end, he had gone to the Divine Plane of Light.

“But Linley... not only is he himself a Dragonblood Warrior, he has a younger brother and five Undying Warriors under his control. He also has that magical beast, Bebe, who is no weaker than him.” Osenno looked at Desri. “In a few decades, that means he will have seven peak-stage Supreme Warriors and a terrifying magical beast. If they were to attack together, our Church would be finished!”

“Lord Desri, our Church would be finished!”

“The life’s labor of Lord Ernst would be destroyed!”

Osenno’s voice caused Desri’s heart to tremble. He still remembered the help and affection that Ernst, his ‘Big Brother’, had given him.

Linley, Pennslyn, and Delia were standing together. Pennslyn sighed softly to Linley. “The only person Desri feels guilty towards is Ernst. He must feel very torn right now.”

The Ernst Institute got its name from Ernst.

Linley naturally knew much about Ernst as well.

A sigh could be heard from Desri. Desri stared at both sides, then said in a bright voice. “How about this. Both sides take a step back. Consider it giving me, Desri, some face. Alright?”

“Take a step back?” Osenno and Lehman stared at Desri in confusion.

Linley was mystified as well.

“Both of you, come to the center of the lake,” Desri said. Linley trusted Desri, and so with Delia’s hand in his own, he flew to the center of the lake. Osenno and Lehman also quite obediently flew to the center of the lake.

Linley and Delia stood on one side of the massive central boulder, while Osenno and Lehman stood on the other side. Both of them were on guard.

“What is Desri planning?” Linley frowned.

Desri smiled calmly. “I know very well that there is a deep grudge between the two of you. How about this... in the next twenty years, the Radiant Church is not permitted to kill Linley.”

“Twenty years?” Osenno was unhappy. “Lord Desri, twenty years later, Linley will be at the Saint-level in human form. Even if we wanted to kill him, we wouldn’t be able to. Unfair. Unfair!”

“Shut your mouth!” Desri had a hint of anger on his face.

Osenno’s heart shook. He suddenly remembered at this moment... it was Desri whose words counted.

“This requirement is the same as asking the Radiant Church to take a step. As for you, Linley, I also wish for you to take a step back.” Desri looked at Linley.

“Lord Desri, pray tell,” Linley said.

Desri smiled apologetically. “Osenno’s words are true as well. Linley, you yourself aren’t a major threat, but combined with your little brother and those five Undying Warriors, you represent a force of seven Supreme Warriors. That is indeed capable of destroying the Radiant Church. Thus, I want you to agree that from today onward, if you want to seek revenge on the Radiant Church, you have to do so by yourself. The others, including your magical beast, cannot.”

Hearing these words, Osenno and Lehman both let out a sigh of relief.

What sort of place was the Sacred Isle?

That was the headquarters for the entire Radiant Church. They had a huge pile of Angel Saints, and the likes of Heidens and Lord Fallen Leaf. And given that the Sacred Isle was also protected by some large-scale magical formations... anything short of a Deity would definitely die if they attacked.

“Do you understand what I intend, now?” Desri looked at the two sides.

“Our side, within the next twenty years, is not to act against Linley. In exchange for Linley only being allowed to seek revenge on his own?” Osenno

laughed calmly. "I can agree. If we can't even hold you off by yourself, then there is nothing I can say on behalf of our Radiant Church if we are destroyed."

Osenno agreed easily as well.

The Radiant Church wasn't afraid of Linley. They were afraid of the entire group of people behind Linley.

"Linley, how about you?" Desri looked at Linley.

In his heart, Linley was rather unwilling.

"Exterminate the Radiant Church by myself?" Linley still knew his own limits. "A Church that has existed for ten thousand years... that's no easy task. But to reach the Deity level... even Cesar spent five thousand years. The legendary War God who reached the Deity level in a short time period actually was simply fortunate enough to find a divine spark. If it was just based on his own abilities, who knows how long it would have taken?"

Linley frowned.

"Linley!" Desri spoke again. Osenno and Lehman were both looking at him.

Linley suddenly turned to look at Delia by his side. Linley's heart trembled. "No matter what, I can't let Delia come to harm." Linley made up his mind. He immediately said to Desri, "The Radiant Church is not permitted to attack me within the next twenty years, fine, but there's one more clause... they are forever forbidden from harming my family and friends."

"Fine," Osenno hurriedly said.

Linley looked at Osenno, a hint of cold light in his eyes. He secretly said to himself, "By myself? Although I might not dare to attack the Sacred Isle, but if I ever meet you people traveling alone, can't I kill you then? If you want, then just stay inside the Sacred Isle forever!"

For the sake of his family and friends, Linley chose to accept this compromise.

Osenno and Lehman both let out secret sighs of relief. After all, Desri was on Linley's side. They didn't have much support here.

In the middle of the lake in Mt. Blackraven, Linley's side and the Radiant Church both accepted this treaty.

“If in the next twenty years, Linley comes to attack us, we will counterattack. If he dies due to our counterattack, we cannot be blamed,” Osenno hurriedly said. Linley sneered. “Hrmph. Don’t worry. I don’t plan to play word games with you.”

Linley suddenly laughed loudly. “If in the future, someone like the War God leads experts to attack the Sacred Isle, I’ll also seize the opportunity to go. I cannot be blamed in that situation.”

“That naturally wouldn’t be your fault.” Osenno shook his head.

If the War God wanted to destroy the Radiant Church, most likely the Radiant Church would’ve been finished long ago.

After the two agreed to the treaty, Delia suddenly said, “Then what about the territory in the Anarchic Lands? Will Saints take part in the battles?”

“Saints?” Osenno frowned.

Indeed. The Radiant Church had a large expanse of territory under its control in the Anarchic Lands, and Linley did as well. If the two came to a fight... once Saints got involved in the battle, then perhaps before the twenty years was up, Linley and the Radiant Church would come to blows.

“How about this,” Desri spoke.

“Mortal, worldly battles... Saints are not to be involved.” Desri looked towards Pennslyn. “Madame, go find O’Casey of the Cult of Shadows. Tell him I need to speak with him. We’ll wait for you here.”

“Fine.” Pennslyn nodded, then flew away immediately.

“O’Casey? Who is he?” Linley frowned as he asked.

Osenno said, “O’Casey is the Elder Judge of the Cult of Shadow’s Tribunal. His position is equivalent to mine in the Radiant Church. He is also the general supervisor for the Cult of Shadows in the Anarchic Lands.”

Linley nodded.

“In mortal battles, Saints are not to participate. Linley... dare you accept?” Osenno stared coldly at Linley.

“Barker and his brothers aren’t Saints in their human form. They should be able to participate in battle, right?” Linley asked.

“Of course. They are just five warriors of the ninth rank,” Osenno said disdainfully. “Linley, in terms of the numbers of experts of the ninth rank, you are far from being able to match our Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows.”

Linley smiled confidently, not paying any attention to him.

“Delia.” Linley held Delia’s hand. Right now, he was still in Dragonform, and his hand was covered with scales, but Delia didn’t mind at all. She looked at Linley, and in a soft voice, she said, “Linley, thank you.”

Delia knew that Linley had compromised for her sake in part.

Linley didn’t say anything.

After all these years and having suffered so much, Linley had learned something. Sometimes, a single mistake caused by being unbending could cause someone to suffer a lifetime of regret. The occasional compromise that allows one’s loved ones to be safe also allowed one to pursue revenge with even greater ferocity!

“What, I am unable to eliminate the Radiant Church by myself?”

Linley secretly said to himself, “In history, has there ever been a Supreme Warrior Saint who was also a Grand Magus Saint?” When his power reached its utmost peak, Linley would prepare to challenge the Sacred Isle. Even if he wasn’t able to destroy it, he should be able to escape with his life.

A long time later.

“Boss!” A black shadow streaked towards him at high speed.

“Bebe.” Linley felt delighted.

Bebe hopped directly onto Linley’s shoulders, then stared angrily at Osenno. “This guy came again?”

“It’s fine now,” Linley said.

“Hrmph.” Bebe sneered coldly, then said mentally, “Boss, don’t be afraid of these people. In the Forest of Darkness, I made friends with a few Saint-level

magical beasts. All of them are really powerful. When the time comes, I'll ask them to help out and deal with these guys together."

"Saint-level magical beast friends?" Linley stared at Bebe in astonishment.

When Linley trained, Bebe would often go have fun in the Forest of Darkness. Unexpectedly, he had actually made friends with Saint-level magical beasts.

"Right. They are all quite powerful. Haeru's race is normally at the ninth rank. He just barely broke through. His power amongst Saint-level magical beasts is just ordinary. But these friends that I made, like 'Big White', he is a Thunderwinged White Tiger. The 'Big Guy', he is a Golden Behemoth. Or 'Big Snake', a Nine-Headed Serpent Emperor."

Linley was utterly speechless. How could Saint-level magical beasts make friends with other Saint-level magical beasts so easily?

"Right. One of the Saints is also a rat-type magical beast," Bebe chortled.

Linley was startled.

A Saint-level rat-type magical beast?

"Unfortunately, he's male," Bebe mentally said with resignation.

Linley didn't know whether to laugh or to cry. As they mentally conversed, he asked, "What does that Saint-level rat-type beast look like? Is he like you?"

"No." Bebe shook his head. "That Saint-level magical beast is all purple. He's quite handsome. However, he treats me quite well. He even gave me many precious, delicious things to eat." Bebe's face was all smiles.

Linley secretly sighed.

A purple Saint-level rat? The books had no record of such a creature. It seems the books were incomplete.

"But Boss, all of those friends of mine are very arrogant. They only became my friends after fighting with me." Bebe's face was covered with a delighted smile.

Just at this moment, two human figures streaked through the air at high speed. One of the two was Pennslyn. As for the other, it was a man covered in a

long black robe. It should have been Osenno's counterpart in the Cult of Shadows; Senior Judge O'Casey.

The Wedding

O'Casey landed in the middle of the lake, while at the same time, removing his enveloping black robe. Inside, he was wearing a tailored suit, like a gentleman at a banquet.

"Lord Desri, I've heard of your famous name long ago, but only today do we meet. I truly feel honored." O'Casey smiled as he bowed, and then turned to look at the nearby Osenno. "Oh, Osenno. Who is this person next to you?"

Lehman's voice rumbled out, "Commander Lehman of the Zealot Division!"

"Mr. Lehman." O'Casey smiled and nodded.

"Master Linley, ten years ago, our Cult of Shadows invited you to come to us, but sadly, at that time, the Radiant Church had sunk its claws into you and wouldn't let you go." O'Casey looked at Linley and began to grumble, as though seeing an old friend of his.

Linley could only smile politely.

"Enough." Desri laughed calmly. "Everyone should know what the situation is. It truly is rather inappropriate for Saints to participate in mortal battles. The Yulan Empire and the O'Brien Empire both do not use Saints in normal battles. Saints are just used as a source of fear."

Desri sighed. "I've been in the Anarchic Lands for thousands of years now. I don't want it to be too anarchic. Thus... I suggest that in the battles between your three sides, Saints are not to participate. Would you be willing to accept this?"

"Yes." Osenno nodded.

Linley smiled and nodded.

Desri immediately looked at O'Casey, who grinned. "Do you need to ask? Of course I accept."

“Wonderful.” Desri’s face grew solemn. With a flip of his hand, he retrieved four scrolls of paper and a pen. “Then today, let the four of us write down a treaty. If any side goes against it... then the other three sides will join forces to destroy them!”

Linley frowned, while O’Casey and Osenno were also startled.

Right now, the strongest of the four sides was definitely Desri’s side. After all, Desri had Higginson, Hayward, and the other Saints behind him.

“Sign here.” Desri quickly wrote down the four agreements, then handed them to Linley, Osenno, and O’Casey.

With a smile, O’Casey was the first to sign his name. Linley didn’t hesitate either as he put down his name.

“Sign!” Osenno signed his name as well.

“Excellent.” Desri smiled. “Each of us will have a copy of this agreement. But of course... this agreement is founded on our personal honor. If someone is so shameless as to allow Saints to do battle, then destroy the evidence... you must know that no secret is airtight. Once it is discovered, then the other three sides will immediately destroy the fourth.”



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It was nightfall now. The night fog covered the skies.

Linley and Delia were enjoying the peaceful night.

“From today onwards, our life will become very peaceful.” Delia’s face had a hint of happiness on it. Smiling, she said, “In the future, we’ll no longer need to worry about many things. Linley, in the future, will you regret today’s decision? Actually, you didn’t have to agree today. I think Desri would still have supported you.”

Linley, too, had the feeling that Desri was still on their side.

Even if he had not agreed, Desri wouldn’t have allowed the enemy to kill him.

“No. I will never regret today’s decision.” Linley held Delia in his arms.

“Because if I did not agree, given my current power, although I can protect myself, I am not necessarily able to protect you. If you were to die... I think I would regret it for the rest of my life!”

It was because he had thought of Delia and of his family and friends that Linley had made this decision.

“Thank you,” Delia rested her head against Linley’s chest and said in a soft voice.

Feeling her soft warmth, Linley felt all the more certain that this decision was the right one.



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Yulan calendar, year 10010. July 21st. The City of Baruch (formerly Blackdirt City) was a hubbub of commotion. The construction of Baruch City was now complete. The inner city was a renovated Blackdirt City. The construction style of Baruch City focused on ‘simplicity’ and ‘practicality’.

The palace didn’t take up too much area. It was only two square kilometers in size.

In the past, when the Baruch Duchy had been founded, they had begun the renovations. After five months, they had finally finished. Most of the buildings in the palace were a single story tall, while the tallest buildings were only two stories high. The main hall of the main palace was very large, capable of holding several hundred people.

And today, the main hall was full of guests.

“Your Majesty, Linley, I come as the representative of the Emperor of the Rohault Empire to bring our sincerest congratulations,” A middle-aged man said respectfully to Linley. Linley toasted him with a cup of wine, while Delia held her arm in his. Smiling, the two toasted him.

The two were very tired from all of this, but they were very happy as well.

“So many people have come today.” Wharton walked to Linley’s side. “Big

Brother, the envoys from the Rohault Empire, Rhine Empire, and the O'Brien Empire have all arrived. Oh... look. Those ones are from the kingdoms of the great plains of the far east."

"Mighty King Linley, on behalf of our King of the Muhan Kingdom, we would like to convey our King's most sincere congratulations." An envoy from the Muhan Kingdom of the great plains of the far east also toasted Linley, and Linley naturally had to give him face and respond.

Linley and Delia shared a smile.

"Linley, you seem rather tired," Delia said softly.

"I'm not too bad." Linley forced out a smile. Linley hated having to welcome guests, but today was his own wedding. He couldn't hide from this responsibility. Delia said softly, "How about this? For those people of lower status, let me handle them."

In the past, Delia worked as a diplomat. Thus, making conversation was quite easy for her.

And she was much better at it than Linley, who would just say a few short, blunt sentences.

"Lord Cardinal Guillermo of the Radiant Church has arrived!" The voice rang out from outside the hall, and the entire hall fell rather silent. Linley and the Radiant Church, and the grudges between them, was known to everyone here. After all, the news of Linley's slaughter of those six Angels had spread across the continent.

But now, the Radiant Church was actually sending someone over?

"King Linley." Guillermo bowed modestly as he stepped forward.

Linley still remembered how, ten years ago, Guillermo had gone to the Ernst Institute to recruit him. Now, after more than ten years, Guillermo was still a Cardinal, while he was now the king of a kingdom whom even the Radiant Church had to compromise with.

"Mr. Guillermo, please come inside and rest," Linley said with a smile.

"The disciples of the War God's College have arrived!"

The people who came were Castro and two other personal disciples.

“Lord McKenzie has arrived!”

Yet another Saint.

“Lord O’Casey of the Cult of Shadows has arrived!”

Hearing the list of names, the envoys of the various kingdoms and Empires all headed off to the various corners to engage in conversation. Good heavens. All of them were Saints.

“Three disciples of the High Priest of the Yulan Empire have arrived!”

Linley and Delia immediately went to welcome them. Seeing these people, Delia immediately called out with excitement, “Big Brother!” The person in the center of this three-person delegation was Dixie. Dixie and his two fellow apprentices both walked over, offering Linley their congratulations.

“Linley, you finally lived up to my little sister’s hopes.” In front of Linley, Dixie finally showed a smile.

When they were at the Ernst Institute, Linley and Dixie had been acknowledged as the two major geniuses.

Dixie suddenly whispered into Linley’s ears, “Linley, let me warn you. In the future, you better not make my little sister angry. Otherwise... even if I’m not able to deal with you, I’ll ask my Master to personally make an appearance!”

“No need for your Master to make an appearance. I’ll engage in self-punishment.” Linley began to laugh.

Today, Linley could feel that he and Dixie were on very close terms now. Seeing how friendly Linley and Dixie were being, Delia felt extremely happy.

Right at this time.

“The disciples of the ‘War Saint’ of the great plains of the far east have arrived!” The voice ringing out from outside the hall confused Linley.

Who was the ‘War Saint’?

Desri had arrived very early today, and he went to Linley’s side. He whispered, “Linley, currently, there are four people on par with me in the Yulan continent.

The number one expert of the great plains of the far east, the ‘War Saint’ Tulily is one of them.”

Linley now understood.

There were five Prime Saints. One was Fain. Another was Desri. So a third was this Tulily. Who were the other two?

A middle-aged plainsman with a turban around his head walked in, two people behind him. Seeing Linley, the plainsman smiled. “King Linley. I, Moor, would like to bring my master’s most sincere greetings and congratulations.”

“My deepest thanks to Mr. Tulily.” Linley smiled.

The eyes of the plainsman, Moor, lit up. “So King Linley also knows of my master’s name. Ah. Lord Desri.” The plainsman immediately bowed upon seeing Desri.

Moor had previously seen his master, Tulily, personally spar with this Desri. His master, Tulily, had said that this Desri was on par with his own power. Naturally, Moor was extremely courteous.

“The Holy Lady of the Frost Goddess Shrine has arrived!”

Desri and Pennslyn immediately went to welcome her. Naturally, Linley and Delia went as well. Linley felt quite curious. How powerful exactly was this mysterious Frost Goddess Shrine?

This ‘Holy Lady’ had long, jade hair, and she seemed as cold and as unapproachable as a block of ice. Behind her were two beautiful girls.

“Big sister.” Pennslyn was boundlessly overjoyed.

Desri whispered to Linley, “Linley, this ‘Holy Lady’ of the Frost Goddess Shrine, Rosarie, is the number one expert of the Frost Goddess Shrine. Her power is on par with mine.” Hearing these words, Linley understood that this Rosarie should be yet another of the Five Prime Saints.

He now knew four of the Prime Saints: Fain, Desri, Tulily, and Rosarie.

“Who is the last one?” Linley secretly wondered. Unfortunately, the last expert didn’t arrive, even by the time the wedding was concluded.

In the main hall of the Baruch Kingdom, there was a huge pile of Saints. All the envoys of the various Empires were engaged in conversation, while the Saints were engaged in conversation with the other Saints. Desri and Rosarie and the others were together as well.

Each level was segregated quite clearly.

“The envoy of the Yulan Empire has arrived!”

The person who had come was George.

“Second Bro.” Linley began to laugh loudly, and George excitedly ran towards him, then intentionally made a deep bow. “O most puissant King Linley! I, George, on behalf of his Imperial Majesty... urgh!” Linley whacked George on the shoulder, not letting him get the words out.

“Enough, sheesh. Acting like this in front of me.” Linley was overjoyed. “Come, come see Fourth Bro with me.”

“Fourth Bro is here as well?” George was extremely excited.

Ever since they had separated seven or eight years ago, he hadn’t seen Reynolds a single time.

“Fourth Bro!” “Second Bro!”

As soon as Reynolds and George saw each other, they instantly shouted and then threw their arms around each other. And right at this time...

“The Chairman of the Dawson Conglomerate has arrived!” Before the announcement was even finished, Yale rushed into the main hall. He immediately saw Linley, Reynolds, and George.

“Haha, Second Bro, Third Bro, Fourth Bro, your Boss has arrived!”

Laughing loudly, Yale charged towards them.

The many people in the hall all looked at these four friends. If ordinary people had caused such a scene, they probably would’ve been rebuked already. But this was Linley and his closest friends. No one dared to say a thing.

Ten years late, the four bros had finally come together in one spot.

“Hey, as soon as this kid Linley has become a King, he starts acting differently.

His attendants even ask me where my letter of invitation is? And asks me who I am? Jeeze, what a pain!” A lazy looking middle-aged man in a long, loose robe suddenly appeared in the middle of the hall. He grabbed a nearby cup of wine, then took two sips, seeming to enjoy it very much.

“Mm. Not bad.” An expression of satisfaction was on his face.

“Lord Cesar?!” In the main hall, Barker suddenly saw this middle-aged man. He would never forget this Deity who had saved his life.

That Night

Barker and his brothers immediately rushed forward, but Cesar frowned in impatience. “Don’t get so close to me. Don’t let me become the center of attention. Low-key, low-key!” The five brothers could only grin awkwardly as they greeted Cesar from far away.

“Gurgle.”

As he sampled the wine, Cesar went hiding into a corner of the room. Whenever he encountered the envoys of the kings and emperors, he would toast them, not putting on any airs of being a Deity at all.

“Cesar,” a cold voice suddenly rang out.

Cesar turned. An awkward smile couldn’t help but to appear on his face. The person who had spoken was the Holy Lady of the Frost Goddess Shrine, Rosarie. Rosarie stared at Cesar. She snorted a few times, but she didn’t say anything else. Being stared daggers at like this, Cesar couldn’t do anything except grin stupidly.

“You’ve already become a Deity, but you still act like this.” A hint of moisture seemed to appear in the eyes of Rosarie, the icy beauty.

Cesar squeezed out a smile. “Rosarie, aren’t you having a wonderful time being the Holy Lady? Alas, I’m just a wastrel who wanders all over the place. I go wherever I like and do what I like. I can’t take good care of you.” Cesar felt some misery in his heart.

“Lord Cesar.” Linley saw Cesar as well.

“Don’t go.” Desri held Linley back, a ‘nasty’ little smirk on his face. “Why are you going to get between those two lovebirds?”

“Lovebirds? Isn’t she the Holy Lady?” Linley was stunned.

“Who says a Holy Lady can’t have a man?” Desri glanced at Linley. “Rosarie is

almost at the Deity level herself. For her to continue working on behalf of the Frost Goddess Shrine is already giving it quite a bit of face.” Desri grinned as he watched Cesar and Rosarie from afar.

Linley exchanged amused glances with Delia. “Linley, so this is the Lord Cesar you spoke of?” Linley nodded.

“It seems this Deity has incurred a romantic debt.” Delia pursed her lips as she laughed, and Linley shook his head as well. “Lord Cesar, he, uh... how should I put this... he’s quite the dissolute romantic.”

This night was quite a festive one, especially Desri’s group. George, Yale, and Reynolds as well. By the time he greeted and chatted with everyone, it was already midnight. Only now did Linley head towards Delia’s room...

One of the benefits of being a Saint was that despite having drank an enormous amount of wine, Linley wasn’t drunk at all.

“Linley?”

He heard someone call his name before he even reached the door. Linley turned and saw Cesar lying on a couch and drinking wine. “Linley, how come you ended up getting married? Jeeze, after I heard you got married, I felt really sorry for you.”

“Really sorry?” Linley was stunned.

Cesar stood up, then flew over gracefully. “Really sorry! Yet another man has stepped into his tomb!” As he spoke, Cesar’s body flew high into the air. “Oh yeah, happy wedding. Alright, I’m off.” Cesar’s voice sounded in Linley’s ears.

Suddenly...

“You old lecher!” A clear sharp sound. A graceful, white-garbed figure flew into the air as well, chasing after Cesar.

Cesar’s flying speed instantly increased.

“Uh... maybe it’s better to be in the ‘tomb’.” Linley had a hint of a smile on his lips as he headed out. Soon, he arrived at the doorway to Delia’s room. There were two beautiful maids in front of it, and the two maids respectfully drew open the door.

Linley waved his hand at them. "You can go now."

"Yes, your Majesty."

In the dark room, the only person there was Delia, sitting quietly in front of her bed. She just looked at Linley, waiting for Linley to speak. And finally, Linley did speak... "Bebe. Get out."

"Haha, Boss." Bebe crawled out from beneath the bed.

"Bebe?" Delia didn't know whether to laugh or to cry. Today, Bebe disappeared very early on. Who would've thought he had been hiding here?

Linley looked at Bebe, also not knowing whether to laugh or to cry. "Bebe, what are you doing?"

"Preparing a gift for ya, Boss!" Bebe raised his head high.

"What gift?" Linley was puzzled.

Bebe grinned, his little claws handing over a black rock. "This is something my good friend gave me. It was that violet-gold Saint-level rat that I told you about last time. I'm too young and haven't accumulated much wealth, so my bro gave me this."

"What is this?" Linley took the black stone in confusion. "Can it be some sort of rare or precious mineral? Can't be. What use would a small piece of rock be anyhow?" Linley carefully inspected it, but couldn't tell what it was.

"I don't know either." Bebe handed it to Delia. "Delia, personalize and soulbind it with blood."

"Bind it with blood?" Linley raised an eyebrow.

Anything that needed to be bound by blood was definitely a treasure. For example, Linley's Bloodviolet sword, or his Coiling Dragon ring. Even the adamantine heavy sword wasn't worthy of needing to be blood bound. Generally speaking, only extremely rare and valuable items would require this process.

"Alright." Delia trusted Bebe very much. A blade of air cut Delia's finger, immediately creating a tiny wound.

A single drop of blood fell onto the black stone.

The black stone suddenly transformed into a ray of light and suddenly enveloped Delia. Linley was shocked... he watched as the black stone merged into Delia's body and utterly vanished.

"What is going on?" Linley was shocked.

He had never seen anything as weird as this before. Bebe stared with a gaping jaw as well. "I have no idea."

"Delia, how do you feel?" Linley immediately asked.

Delia shook her head, puzzled. "I don't feel anything at all. Hmm... actually, it seems I can sense the nearby elemental essence much more clearly. Right. That's it." Linley secretly nodded. Generally speaking, even the vilest of items, once bound by blood, wouldn't harm its master.

Linley wasn't too worried about that.

But... what was that thing?

"Bebe, this black stone... why did that magical beast give it to you? This seems to be a treasure," Linley asked. Of course, all they knew right now about this treasure was one thing; it could increase elemental essence affinity tremendously.

Bebe hurriedly shook his head. "Boss, honestly, that good friend of mine gave it to me. He said it is very useful to magi."

"Very useful to magi?" Linley understood. Perhaps this was some sort of special object that could enhance elemental essence affinity. It was useless to Saint-level magical beasts, which is why he gave it to Bebe. But Linley had a feeling...

There was more than met the eye to this black stone!

"Alright, Bebe. Do you plan to stay here?" Linley stared at Bebe.

Bebe's beady little eyes rolled, and then he rubbed his nose twice. "Boss, once you got a wife, you forgot about Bebe. Sniff." Linley immediately sent a kick in his direction, but by then, Bebe had already disappeared in a flash as he left the room.

The door shut.

The room instantly turned quiet. Linley and Delia sat side by side on the bed.

“What are you looking at?” Delia was a bit shy right now.

Linley laughed. “I’m thinking... about how many kids we should have.” Delia was startled. Linley suddenly lifted Delia up and carried her over to the bed, and then... one piece of clothing after another came flying out from the bed.



*

“Unngh...”

They hadn’t slept all night.

“Whew.” Linley lay there on the bed, with Delia resting on top of him, her head against Linley’s chest. Beads of sweat caused Delia’s fragrant hair to stick to Linley’s body. Linley lowered his head to look at Delia. That faintly red face looked like that of a kitten’s.

Her pert little nose was sniffing.

Linley’s hand gently stroked Delia’s slick, bare back. In his mind, he continued to savor what had happened just then. How nervous he had felt when he had entered Delia’s body... Linley had to admit, things had gotten just a little too wild just then. It had been three entire hours.

“Delia, what is it?”

“I want to cry.” Delia hugged Linley’s chest. “I just want to cry right now. When I think about how you and Alice were together, I want to cry. When I think about how I waited ten years, I want to cry.” “Sob.”

Linley held his head in his hands.

Women. It was impossible to understand them.

“Linley, can I tell you something?” Delia said softly.

“Hrm?” Linley lowered his head to look at Delia.

Delia raised her head to look at Linley. Her face serious, she said in a soft

voice, "You... got hard, down there."

"Uh?"

For a moment, Linley had no idea what to say.

"Delia, you know, Wharton and Nina's kid is going to be born in a few months. Don't you think the two of us need to work harder?" Linley whispered.

"Um?" Delia was startled.

"So, I need to keep at it." Linley flipped over and pressed Delia down once again.

Twelve Years in the Blink of an Eye

The Radiant Church. The Holy Island. The ninth floor of the Radiant Temple.

Staring outside the window, a hint of worry was on Heidens' face. Previously, Linley had made an agreement with the Radiant Church, allowing the Radiant Church to relax. After all, without the assistance of his Supreme Warriors and that terrifying rat-type magical beast, Linley, by himself, wasn't too great a threat.

But they were only relaxed for nine years.

Because on the ninth year, the Radiant Church discovered a terrifying secret.

Linley's human form had reached the Saint level.

"Heidens." An icy voice rang out. Osenno, his devilish purple hair fluttering behind him, appeared in the middle of the ninth floor.

Heidens didn't turn. Calmly, he said, "Osenno, what is it?"

Osenno had a hint of frustration in his voice. "Heidens, the many experts of the Church have been cooped up in the Sacred Isle for three full years. During these three years, you've ordered that we are not to go outside the Sacred Isle without authorization. Heidens... can it be that just because of Linley, we have to live like this?"

"And Heidens, you must understand, the information we got came from an agent who overheard the conversation that Linley's son was having with Wharton's son. That's the only information we have stating that Linley has reached the Saint level in human form. The words of children are not necessarily true," Osenno said unhappily.

Because of this news, that Linley had reached the Saint level in his human form, Heidens asked Osenno and the others to not leave the Sacred Isle.

Heidens remained with his back turned towards Osenno. Calmly, he said,

“Osenno, first of all, Wharton’s son, Cena, is a very reliable and very meticulous youth. His words should be true. And secondly... when Linley was hidden within the O’Brien Empire, he had already reached the ninth rank. It has been over ten years now. Given the rate of growth for Dragonblood Warriors, it is about time that Linley reaches the Saint level in human form.”

Heidens suddenly turned and stared at Osenno.

“You should be very clear about how powerful Linley is. Twelve years ago, he was only slightly weaker to you. Now that his human form has reached the Saint level... his power should be more than ten times greater than before. Even if he didn’t gain any additional insights at all, he can defeat you. But do you believe that in twelve years, Linley hasn’t increased his level of insights at all?” Heidens asked Osenno.

Osenno was silent.

He knew full well how quickly Linley trained.

Twelve years without any breakthroughs? Who would believe it?

That ancestor of the Baruch clan who had only reached the ‘impose’ level when he reached the Saint level as a human-form Dragonblood Warrior was nonetheless able to rely on his terrifying post-Saint-level defense and power to fight head on against peak-stage Saint-level magical beasts.

And Linley?

In strength and battle-qi, he was not inferior to his ancestor. However, he had a very deep understanding of the Laws. He was even more terrifying to deal with than the ancestors of the Baruch clan.

“Heidens, the Sacred Isle doesn’t need me to defend it, does it,” Osenno asked.

“Osenno, if you truly want to leave the Sacred Isle... I won’t try to stop you,” Heidens said calmly. “But leaving the Sacred Isle means that you are betting that Linley won’t find and kill you! Of course, your fleeing abilities are top notch. But I’m not certain if you would be able to flee from Linley.”

Osenno had the Doppelganger Technique and was very fast.

But he probably only had a 50-50 chance of fleeing and surviving if Linley encountered him.

“Hmph. Fine. I’ll wait until my Doppelganger Technique reaches the peak before I have another tussle with Linley.” Osenno sneered coldly, and then with a flicker, disappeared from the ninth floor. But although his words were tough, clearly he had already submitted.

A hint of a bitter smile could be seen on Heidens' face.

It was virtually impossible to keep tabs on someone at Linley’s level. Right now, Linley’s flying speed was far quicker than it had been in the past. It would take him less than half a day to cross the entire Yulan continent. This sort of speed... if he wanted to chase after and kill someone, he could definitely make sure that his opponent didn’t have time to call for help.

Yulan calendar, year 10022. May. An area outside Baruch City with wild flower and wild grass swaying, their beautiful dance so moving to behold. Right now, there were two luxurious carriages and a squad of elite knights who were escorting them down this wild road.

“Your Majesty, we are at Mt. Blackraven,” a knight said respectfully towards the second carriage.

Immediately, a husband and wife couple stepped out of the carriage, along with a youth. The couple was Wharton and Nina. Wharton was much more mature now than he had been. He was the King of the Baruch Kingdom, and his personal strength had dramatically increased as well. Wharton’s body emanated the aura of an expert. As for Nina, she wasn’t as unripe as she had been in the past; her body was fuller, now, and she had become even more womanly.

As for that twelve-or thirteen-year-old child in front of them, who seemed so friendly and yet graceful? This child was the son of Wharton and Nina: Cena Baruch.

“Wow, we are at Mt. Blackraven!” An excited voice rang out from the carriage in front of them, and a very excited youth clambered out of the carriage.

“Taylor,” Cena laughed as he called out.

“Big Brother.” Taylor ran over happily. Taylor was relatively handsome, but he was far more energetic than Cena.

At this time, yet another beautiful lady stepped out of the carriage in front, as well as a pretty young girl. It was Delia and her daughter, Sasha. Sasha looked quite similar to Taylor. The two of them were actually twins, but Sasha was born just a little while before Taylor was, and thus Taylor was forced to be the ‘little brother’.

Cena was twelve, while Sasha and Taylor were ten.

“We’re about to see Father soon. I haven’t seen him in half a year.” Taylor was extremely excited right now, and Cena’s eyes had a hint of excitement in them as well. As the children of the Baruch clan, they all worshipped this person who supported the entire Baruch clan... Linley.

The countless members of the Baruch Kingdom also worshipped Linley. Linley was the spiritual support for the entire Baruch Kingdom. There was no question about this.

Although twelve years had passed, Delia’s appearance hadn’t changed at all. In fact, she actually now had a certain aura about her. Delia’s children had blissful smiles on their faces. Twelve years of peaceful, happy life. Delia truly was very satisfied.

She stared at the distant Baruch City.

The royal capital, Baruch City, had been expanded long ago. The normal population was over a million. Because Linley had brought the massive fortune he had taken from the Kingdom of Fenlai, the Baruch Kingdom had easily weathered the first few tough years, and now, the entire kingdom was prospering very nicely.

Raising her head to look at Mt. Blackraven, Delia’s heart was already by Linley’s side.

“Wharton, Nina, let’s go up the mountain.” Delia laughed. “Taylor, Sasha, Cena, follow along.”

“Got it,” Taylor said loudly.

His sister, Sasha, was very quiet. The squad of knights came to a halt at the foot of Mt. Blackraven, while Wharton, Nina, Delia, and the three children went up Mt. Blackraven together. Mt. Blackraven was as beautiful and graceful as ever.

Following the little creek, they finally saw the lake in the distance.

There were now three massive flattened boulders in the center of the lake. The central boulder was the first one that Linley had put down, and the stone house was naturally the one he had built long ago. As for the other two boulders, Linley had arranged them after his wedding, for when people came to visit for a while.

A faint blue figure was currently fishing in the middle of the lake.

“Father!” Taylor’s voice rang out from far away.

That blue-robed figure turned around. It was Linley. Linley looked slightly more mature than he had in the past, and looking at him from a distance, one had the sense that he had totally become one with nature. Linley immediately stood up and laughed, “Haha, Taylor!”

Linley’s standing motion gave the sensation of moving with the wind itself, but it also gave an extremely solid, stable sensation as well. These two opposite sensations, merged into one person, was simply unimaginable for those who didn’t personally experience it.

Linley waved his hand...

“Bang!” Part of the flowing water instantly came to a halt, forming a bridge of water. The other parts of the lake continued to flow normally. Taylor and Sasha, quite experienced, stepped directly onto the bridge of water and ran over.

The water bridge was solid and durable.

If one looked at it closely, one would see that on top of the water bridge were minute, tiny flows of air.

“Taylor. Come. Hug.” Linley happily lifted Taylor into his arms, and the nearby Sasha immediately stared at Linley with her big, innocent eyes. Linley immediately reached out and lifted his beloved daughter into his embrace as

well. “Taylor, Sasha, it’s been half a year since you’ve seen Father. Have you missed Father?”

“Yes,” Taylor said immediately. “Every day.”

Linley’s face instantly was covered with smiles. He could now totally understand how Grandpa Doebling had felt towards him, and how his father’s superficial severity masked a deep layer of love.

“Hey. Taylor, Sasha, Cena, you all came.” A happy voice emanated from the skies, and a black shadow suddenly appeared in the middle of the lake. It was the magical beast Bebe, now two meters long.

Linley looked at Bebe and couldn’t help but laugh inwardly.

Whenever Bebe was in front of these three ‘juniors’ — Taylor, Sasha, and Cena — he always made his body a little bit bigger. As Bebe put it, ‘if my body is too small, I won’t have the aura of an elder’.

“Uncle Bebe.” Taylor immediately broke free from Linley’s embrace and went to hug Bebe.

When Taylor was young, Bebe often played around with Taylor.

Wharton chuckled. “Big Brother, let’s sit down first. We can talk while eating. I brought many delicacies with me.” As he spoke, the family sat down around a long rectangular table, and within his interspatial ring, Wharton withdrew the freshly prepared dishes.

The family began to eat.

“Big Brother, have you heard of the big battle that occurred in the O’Brien Empire?” Wharton asked.

With an ‘Oh’ sound, Linley said, “Are you talking about half a month ago, how Olivier challenged Haydson to another duel?” Olivier had already returned from the Arctic Icecap, returned with the aura of utmost confidence.

Wharton sighed appreciatively. “Right. With just a single sword blow, he killed Haydson, who was famous for his defense. How terrifying.”

“Haydson. Is it the Haydson who dueled with father at Mt. Tujiao?” Taylor raised his head up high and asked. This little fellow deeply venerated Linley, and

he knew the details of Linley's famous battles as well as anyone.

Linley laughed and nodded.

The nearby Delia also sighed in approval. "This Olivier really is formidable. Just one sword blow! Haydson's defensive abilities were legendary. To be killed in one blow..." Delia also sighed repeatedly. The nearby Cena suddenly looked at Linley and asked, "Uncle, if you were to duel with Olivier again, can you win?"

Linley laughed calmly.

"Olivier's improvement speed was faster than I had anticipated. In just twelve years, he reached the level of being able to kill Haydson with one sword blow. Without actually competing with him, it's hard to say who would win and who would lose." Linley laughed.

"Boss, what are you being modest for?" Bebe said unhappily. "Haydson's defense was on par with yours in the past. But now? Just by relying on your post-Saint transformation, the defensive power of your draconic scales alone is on a higher level than the combined power of your draconic scales and Pulseguard Defense of twelve years ago. And now, your Pulseguard Defense is more than ten times greater than before. In front of you, that Olivier isn't worth a fart. Even people on the second tier, like Osenno, don't dare to offend you. I think... only the five Prime Saints are able to compete with you now."

Wharton also said, "Big Brother, you are the most powerful Dragonblood Warrior in the history of our clan. Why be modest?"

Wharton and the others knew exactly how formidable Linley had become.

After twelve years of painstaking training, Linley's level of achievement in understanding the Elemental Laws of the Earth and the Wind was so high as to make Wharton and the others utterly speechless.

Blueheart Grass, Dragon's Blood

Power?

Linley knew exactly how powerful he currently was.

He had reached the Saint level in human form. Once he Dragonformed, his draconic scales were ten times as powerful as they had been in the past. His strength and battle-qi had also risen to terrifying levels. Linley could fully understand... the reason why his ancestors, despite not having a high level of insight, could rely on Dragonform alone to defeat peak-stage Saint-level magical beasts.

As for insight...

The Throbbing Pulse of the World. He had already mastered 256 layers of vibrational waves. The more waves, the more difficult improving became. It had always been like that, but upon reaching the 256th layer of waves, after spending an entire year, he hadn't been able to improve whatsoever.

It seemed... as though 256 layers was some sort of limit.

"It can't be a limit." Linley was very certain. "According to the War God, if one follows an aspect of the Elemental Laws to its limits, then one would enter the Deity level. I'm far, far away from the Deity level. So what exactly comes next, after the 256 layer level?"

Linley didn't know either.

His understandings of the Throbbing Pulse of the World were unique, and there was no one he could ask for advice. All Linley could do every day was to try and immerse himself in the Throbbing Pulse of the World and try to make a breakthrough.

As for the Elemental Laws of the Wind, Linley continued to slowly but surely improve. He hadn't reached a bottleneck yet.

“However, spiritual energy really is hard to build up. After twelve years, I’m still only at the peak of the ninth rank. Breaking through to the Grand Magus Saint-level really is hard.” Linley sighed in his heart. If anyone else heard what Linley was thinking, they would have cursed him to hell and back.

As a magus, going from the sixth to the seventh rank was one bottleneck, while going from the ninth rank to the Saint level was the other major bottleneck.

How could this bottleneck be so easily broken through?

Linley looked at Delia, and he couldn’t help but think back to that black rock that Bebe had given her on their wedding night. “In just twelve years, Delia has advanced from the seventh rank as a magus to the ninth rank as an Arch Magus. Although she previously had already been at the seventh rank for quite a few years, this sort of improvement rate really is shocking .”

Delia was already an Arch Magus of the ninth rank.

After the wedding, Delia had discovered that it wasn’t just her elemental essence affinity that had been raised to a terrifying level; she was even able to absorb mageforce at an astonishing speed, and her spiritual energy rapidly increased as well... her rate of improvement vastly outstripped Linley’s. As Linley saw it, there was only one explanation for this change.

That mysterious black rock.

After the meal.

Cena, Taylor, and Sasha were having fun by the lake, while Linley, Wharton, Delia, and the others all sat down.

“Big Brother.” Wharton finally brought up the purpose of their trip. “Cena and Taylor were tested when they were young. The density of dragonblood in their veins hasn’t reached the required level. It seems we’ll have to use that method you spoke of in the past.”

Linley frowned.

“Oh? That’s right. It is time to use fresh dragon’s blood to activate the dragonblood in their veins, so they can begin training in the Secret Dragonblood

Manual early on.” Linley nodded slightly. When Linley had chatted with the Planar Overseer, Hodan, he had realized...

There were far more Dragonblood Warriors in the history of the Baruch clan than the book had mentioned. The real number was very high, and they relied on dragon’s blood.

“Would it be very dangerous?” Delia was a bit nervous.

“As long as the dragon’s blood is mixed in with Blueheart Grass, there is no danger at all to activating the dragonblood in their veins,” Linley said with absolute certainty, while at the same time, he looked at the three children by the lake. “Taylor and Cena need to have their blood activated. What about Sasha?”

“Sasha?” Wharton and Delia both looked at the distant Sasha.

Sasha was just a girl. Although male warriors generally were somewhat superior to female warriors, that didn’t mean girls couldn’t become experts.

Delia smiled calmly. “Let her make her own choice.”

Linley nodded slightly.



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“Become a Dragonblood Warrior?” Taylor was the first to whoop in joy. “Oh, I’ll do it, I’ll totally do it. I dream about being a Dragonblood Warrior like Father. Wow! I’m excited just thinking about it.”

Cena nodded slightly as well. “I’ll do it.”

Linley, Wharton, Nina, and Delia weren’t surprised. It’d be weird if any of the male children in their lineage passed on this opportunity. Now they all looked at Sasha. Sasha was very quiet. Although she was just ten years old, the beauty she had inherited from Delia was beginning to show.

“I... I’ll do it also.” Sasha bit her lips, but nodded firmly.

Delia stroked Sasha’s head and praised, “Sasha, in the future, you are going to be a powerful female Dragonblood Warrior.” A smile appeared on Sasha’s face.

“Alright.” Linley nodded. “If that’s the case... then Wharton, Nina, you can just hand Cena to me. I’ll take the three of them to... the Mountain Range of the Setting Sun to search for Saint-level dragons. It’s time to engage in some bloodletting with Saint-level dragons.” Linley chuckled.

Engage in bloodletting with Saint-level dragons. These words filled the eyes of Sasha, Taylor, and Cena with shock and joy.

“I’ll go as well.” Wharton was somewhat nervous.

“Hey, little Wharton, you’re only at the ninth rank. Even after transforming, you are only an early-stage Saint.” Bebe flew over here and said unhappily, “Do you think your level of insight is comparable to the Boss of twelve years ago?”

Although he was also an early-stage Saint after transforming, in terms of insight, Wharton was far inferior to Linley.

“I’ll go with the Boss. Shit, if one dragon comes we’ll kill one dragon; if two comes, we’ll kill one, then capture the other one to use as a mount.” Bebe was extremely boastful, but he had the strength to back it up. After the past twelve years, Bebe’s power was far stronger than it had been twelve years ago as well.

Wharton nodded and laughed. “Since you are going as well, Bebe, then I won’t be worried at all.”

The squad was thus decided as being: Linley, Bebe, Delia, and the three kids. Delia was responsible for taking care of the kids, and Bebe’s job was to protect them. As for Linley... he would deal with any Saint-level dragons.



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The skies stretched off far into the distance, and a few white clouds were drifting here and there. A ten-meter-long magical beast was soaring through the air at high speed. It was the transformed Bebe, with Delia, Cena, Taylor, and Sasha on his back.

Delia had cast a magic spell to form a protective invisible barrier, preventing the wind from scraping against the children’s bodies.

“Wow... Mother, that city is the biggest one I’ve ever seen.” Taylor pointed below at a ‘fist-sized’ city. Although the city seemed small from up above, the size of this ‘fist’ was actually a huge space.

A complicated look was in Delia’s eyes. Sighing, she said, “That is my homeland, the imperial capital of the Yulan Empire.”

“The imperial capital of the Yulan Empire?” Taylor, Sasha, and Cena all looked down.

“Hungry yet?” Delia withdrew some food they had brought along from the interspatial ring. Bebe had transformed to ten meters in length, and his back was naturally very wide. Given that Delia had then used magic to block the wind, this made Sasha, Cena, and Taylor feel as stable as when they were on the ground.

They sat down and began to enjoy the food.

Bebe flew very stably, with no turbulence at all.

“Delia, don’t pamper those kids too much,” Linley, flying alongside Bebe, said with a laugh as he saw this.

Delia looked at Linley. “Linley, don’t reprimand me. You see your children so rarely, and you are going to reprimand me?” Linley immediately didn’t dare to say a word. He actually did feel very guilty. Sometimes, he would go off and train for months at a time. He did indeed feel as though he owed the kids and Delia a lot.

Linley looked down at the boundless earth. They weren’t too far from the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts now.

The three major gathering grounds for magical beasts in the Yulan continent were the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, the Forest of Darkness, and the Mountain Range of the Setting Sun. Of course, other places also had magical beasts, but they were much rarer in those places. But in these three places, a terrifyingly high number of magical beasts congregated.

By now, both the Forest of Darkness and the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts had a Deity present. Thus, Linley had chosen to go to the Mountain Range of the Setting Sun.

A long time later...

The peaks of the Mountain Range of the Setting Sun appeared in the horizon. The Mountain Range of the Setting Sun started from the Dark Alliance, followed the southern boundaries of the Yulan Empire, and then intersected between the Rhine Empire and the Burning Desert.

In truth, the Mountain Range of the Setting Sun and the Burning Desert were both the southernmost points of the Yulan continent.

If one went past the Mountain Range of the Setting Sun or the Burning Desert, they would enter the boundless Southern Seas.

“Wow, it’s so big. It seems to be even longer than the Forest of Darkness,” Taylor said in surprise. Taylor and the others had flown on Bebe’s back before and had seen the Forest of Darkness from the air.

Cena said, “Taylor, according to the books, the Mountain Range of the Setting Sun and the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts are both very long, but only around a thousand kilometers wide. As for the Forest of Darkness, it is thousands of kilometers long, but also two or three thousand kilometers wide.”

Taylor nodded in understanding.

“Get ready to go down,” Linley suddenly said.

The giant Bebe next to Linley suddenly dove down along with him. When they were only a few hundred meters away from the mountains, the two halted in mid-air.

“We’re going to fly at this height for now. Bebe and I are going to go meet some dragon Saints,” Linley said to Delia and the kids.

“Don’t worry about us, Father,” Taylor said confidently.

Linley, looking at his son, couldn’t help but chuckle, and then split apart from Bebe. At the same time, he began to scan the area below with his spiritual energy. The Mountain Range of the Setting Sun didn’t have fewer monsters than the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. Naturally, there were quite a few Saints as well.

But the Mountain Range of the Setting Sun was very large. The Saint-level

magical beasts were scattered all over. To instantly find a Saint-level dragon was not likely.

“Hrm?” Linley’s spiritual energy suddenly discovered a Saint-level magical beast, one that Linley was fairly familiar with. It was a Violet-Eyed Goldfur Ape. This terrifying, three story tall Saint-level beast suddenly noticed a human was scanning him.

“Who is it?” The Violet-Eyed Goldfur Ape’s voice rang out like a bolt of thunder, and it raised its head to stare at the human in mid-air.

Linley stood there in mid-air, transmitting his voice downwards. “Linley of the Anarchic Lands. Excuse me for disturbing you.” After finishing speaking, the Violet-Eyed Goldfur Ape didn’t bother with him any further. Saint-level magical beasts were more intelligent than even your average human.

Ones that had lived a long time were very familiar with the experts of the Yulan continent.

Some of the most powerful experts, such as Desri of the Anarchic Lands, Hayward, Tulily of the great plains, were known to them. Linley of the Anarchic Lands had also become well-known amongst magical beast experts. As long as Linley didn’t go too far, these Saint-level magical beasts didn’t want to fight such a peak expert either.

After searching for quite a while.

“Boss, I found a Saint-level dragon. It is a darkness-element Tyrant Wyrms,” Bebe’s voice rang out in Linley’s mind. Not hesitating at all, Linley flew directly towards Bebe at high speed.

In the ground atop a mountain, Linley instructed, “Cena, you and the other kids all stay here. Delia will take care of you... Bebe, no matter what, you have to protect them.” Linley looked at Bebe, who said confidently, “Don’t worry, Boss. My Shadowshape Doppelganger Technique is able to create four now.”

Given Bebe’s terrifying speed and his Shadowshape Doppelganger Technique, even three ordinary Saint-level magical beasts working in concert still wouldn’t be able to hurt Delia and the others.

“Be careful, Father,” Sasha said.

Linley began to laugh. “Right. Just wait here. I’ll go bring that Tyrant Wyrml over.” As he spoke, Linley flew away at high speed. Delia and the kids just stood there, watching. Fortunately, because they were on a hill, they could see far.

A short while later...

Linley arrived in the air above the Tyrant Wyrml. The dragon race was divided into two types; the extremely strong and tough wingless dragons, and the magically powerful winged dragons. The Tyrant Wyrml was one of the most powerful wingless dragons. Its enormous body was over a hundred meters long, and its pitch-black, marble-like scales were terrifyingly hard.

The Tyrant Wyrml had already noticed Linley. Its massive eyes burned like fire as it stared at Linley. “Who are you?”

“Linley of the Anarchic Lands,” Linley said.

“Linley?” the Tyrant Wyrml growled, “I am Plaket of the Mountain Range of the Setting Sun. Linley, what do you want?” This Saint-level Tyrant Wyrml of the Mountain Range of the Setting Sun was also an apex combatant.

Linley smiled. “Plaket, I want to borrow some of your draconic blood.”

“Growl...” The eyes of the Tyrant Wyrml, Plaket, filled with a fiery rage, and the massive trees and boulders around him began to burn. “Linley, are you trying to humiliate me, Plaket? If you don’t beat it, then prepare to receive my fiery rage.”

In mid-air, Linley could only shake his head and sigh helplessly. With a flip of his hand, he withdrew Bloodviolet.

A Heated Battle

Seeing Linley draw out Bloodviolet, the Tyrant Wyrms knew that Linley was going to go head on against him!

As a Saint-level dragon, the Tyrant Wyrms was naturally extremely arrogant.

“Bang!” It angrily stomped the ground, causing the earth to shake and crack. The nearby trees all snapped apart and fell, and the Tyrant Wyrms’s hill-sized body shot directly into the air, breathing hellfire as its fiery red eyes stared at Linley.

It didn’t dare to be overconfident.

“Plaket, you are so huge. I just want a little bit of draconic blood.” Linley shook his head and sighed.

“You are trying to insult me, insult a mighty Saint-level dragon!” The Tyrant Wyrms, Plaket, suddenly opened his mouth and blasted out a scorching cloud of black draconic fire, which suddenly enveloped ‘Linley’... but ‘Linley’ immediately dissipated.

Plaket suddenly stared upwards.

Linley was right above him. “Be careful. I’m going to start attacking you now.” Linley seemed to be quite polite.

“Hrmph.” The Tyrant Wyrms, Plaket, felt even more insulted, and his massive body immediately rose at a terrifying pace. “Boom!” A sonic boom could be heard as the Tyrant Wyrms sent its entire massive bulk against Linley.

But hadn’t he already noticed Linley’s astonishing speed?

“What a sly Tyrant Wyrms.” Linley’s body immediately transformed into a wind-shadow, appearing somewhere else. A black shadow sliced through the air, striking through ‘Linley’. It was the Tyrant Wyrms’s draconic tail.

“Boom!” The speed of the Tyrant Wyrms’ tail caused the air itself to form enormous wind blades which flew in the same direction. The nearby trees and boulders were chopped into small pieces like tofu, and the nearby trees all collapsed.

The speed of the draconic tail alone was enough to create such terrifyingly powerful wind blades. Then how powerful must the actual tail itself be?

“Must not take this draconic tail head on.” Linley’s face grew serious.

“Whoosh!” Linley’s speed suddenly reached its limit, turning into nothing more than a tiny gust of wind. Linley’s current level of control over the wind was now far more terrifying than it had been twelve years ago. The Tyrant Wyrms’ entire body was emitting a scorching, infernal heat, and the air around instantly began to rise to a terrifyingly high temperature.

If Linley was going to attack, he would have to enter this realm of infernal heat.

Linley’s body was covered with that azurish-black wave of energy. Using the Pulseguard Defense, Linley charged straight into the black flames.

“Swish!” Bloodviolet transformed into a streak of violet lightning. It seemed to have passed through reality itself as it reached a terrifying speed, causing space to grow distorted. The blurred space began to fold and distort, and the violet ray of light landed directly on the Tyrant Wyrms’ body.

Profound Truths of the Wind – Spatial Folding.

Crunch!

Bloodviolet chopped out a large wound that was one meter long and thirty centimeters deep. However, not a single drop of the Tyrant Wyrms’ blood came out. This was because its scales were more than thirty centimeters thick.

“What strong defense. It wasn’t broken through by my sword.” Linley was startled. The power of his Spatial Folding attack was so great that it was only one step lower than Higginson’s ‘Illusionary Void Sword’. After all, Linley’s understanding of the ‘Fast’ aspect was still lower than Higginson’s.

Higginson had trained for thousands of years, after all.

“If you have any balls, come fight me, Plaket, head on!” the Tyrant Wyrms roared angrily. He could clearly sense that Linley’s speed was simply too fast, but just as he roared out these words and Linley was about to respond, dozens of black tentacles of infernal fire suddenly appeared out of nowhere from the Tyrant Wyrms’ body and surrounded Linley.

“Tentacles?”

Linley was startled, while at the same time, he felt the tentacles surrounding him were as cold as ice. Linley didn’t worry about his current situation at all. Instead, he began to wonder, “These things are like octopus tentacles. How is it that a Tyrant Wyrms...”

“Boss, these are the ‘Icy Tentacles’ of the darkness spells,” Bebe’s voice rang out in Linley’s mind.

Linley now understood.

The Tyrant Wyrms turned and stared at Linley with its flaming eyes. “Linley, prepare to die.” But before it even had a chance to attack, the deep azure layer of energy around Linley began to roil about and expand... and as it did so, those Icy Tentacles began to shudder.

“Bang!” They exploded.

The Pulseguard Defense now had 256 layers to it. It was more than ten times as powerful as it had been in the past.

But just as Linley exploded those Icy Tentacles... “Swish!” That lightning-fast draconic tail slashed over once more. Linley’s body instantly retreated at high speed, but it nonetheless grazed the edges of the Pulseguard Defense. The terrifying power transmitted by that draconic tail caused Linley’s body to shake.

“There is nothing even remotely ‘ordinary’ about the strength of Tyrant Wyrms.” Linley was secretly surprised.

Experts on the level of Haydson probably couldn’t do anything against this Tyrant Wyrms, given its power.

“Growl!” The Tyrant Wyrms roared angrily, and its terrifying voice somehow seemed to be ‘locked’ into a specific region and blasted against Linley. The

terrifying sound caused Linley's ears to ring, and then, the Tyrant Wurm wildly charged against Linley.

There was only a distance of a hundred meters between Linley and the Tyrant Wurm, but as it charged at Linley, its size rapidly began to shrink.

However, its charging attack power seemed to have become even more powerful.

"Groowl!" In the blink of an eye, it seemed like an earthquake or a mountain was charging at Linley.

At the same time, a gray fog appeared out of nowhere, surrounding everything within several hundred meters, including Linley.

"Can't get hit." Linley didn't pay any attention to the fog at all, and he quickly began to dodge as fast as he could while Bloodviolet began to dance in his hands as well. He just barely dodged the charging attack of the Tyrant Wurm, and then Linley delivered yet another sword onto the Tyrant Wurm's body...

His sword was agile and mysterious. It fused both the 'Spatial Freezing' concept and the 'Spatial Folding' concept, two major yet opposite concepts, to form the 'Tempos of the Wind'. The power of this attack was a level higher than even the 'Illusionary Void Sword'.

"Crunch!"

That thick scale instantly split apart.

"Groooooowl!" The Tyrant Wurm let out an agonized, furious growl. Instantly, fresh blood came spurting out from that meter-long wound.

Seeing draconic blood spurt out, Cena, Sasha, and Taylor, watching from afar, all let out whoops of joy. A hint of a smile appeared on Delia's face as well. Clearly, Linley had the advantage. And in truth... Linley hadn't even gone into his Dragonform.

The Tyrant Wurm was actually knocked flying towards the ground.

"Crash!" An earthquake occurred as the Tyrant Wurm's hill-sized body smashed into the ground. At the same time, it raised its head high and howled. "Hooooowl!" A terrifying burst of sound exploded forth from the Tyrant Wurm,

transforming all the nearby trees to splinters.

Bebe managed to react very quickly, instantly creating a black barrier around Delia and the children.

“What are you doing? Showing off your loud voice?” Linley flew down from mid-air. “I’ve already opened up a wound on your body. Just let me retrieve a little bit of fresh blood. Don’t worry, I won’t kill you.”

“You are insulting me.”

The Tyrant Wurm, Plaket, growled with the utmost anger.

But Linley’s face suddenly changed as he turned to stare into the horizon. Two enormous magical beasts were flying towards them at high speed. One of them had a perfectly sinuous body and a pair of enormous physical wings. It was one of the legendary Saint-level Gold Dragons.

As for the other dragon, its shape was roughly the same as the Tyrant Wurm’s, except its scales were a deep blue, and lightning crackled on the surface of its body.

“Saint-level Gold Dragon. Saint-level Thunder Lizard!” Linley felt a bit numb.

The Tyrant Wurm was already very formidable. Even Linley, if he didn’t Dragonform, wouldn’t dare to take the Tyrant Wurm’s draconic tail head on just by using his enhanced Pulseguard Defense. The weakness of the Tyrant Wurm was its speed.

But Saint-level Gold Dragons were extremely fast, and Thunder Lizards... were as fast as lightning.

“Plaket, what’s wrong?” A deep voice came forth from the Thunder Lizard. “Is it this detestable human?”

The Tyrant Wurm growled, “It is, Big Brother. This detestable human is relying on his speed and reaction speed.” The Tyrant Wurm was furious. If it wasn’t for the fact that he was slow, how would he be losing? Tyrant Wurms were slow, but possessed terrifying defense and attack. They were similar to Undying Warriors.

The Thunder Lizard stared at Linley with its two golden eyes.

Saint-level Thunder Lizard. Saint-level Gold Dragon. Saint-level Tyrant Wurm. These three dragons made up an extremely powerful force in the Mountain Range of the Setting Sun. Whenever they met a powerful foe, they would all help each other. When they combined forces... they were terrifying, especially when they compensated for each other's deficiencies.

"Father!" The distant Taylor grow nervous. Cena and Sasha both watched the three Saint-level dragons with concern as well.

The Tyrant Wurm flew into the air. Each of the enormous dragons were the size of a small mountain. The three Saint-level dragons flew in the air side by side, blocking out the sunlight. Their terrifying suppressive aura alone was enough to make one's heart shudder.

"If he's just fast, he's not worth us using our combination attack," a calm voice came out from the throat of the Saint-level Gold Dragon.

A hint of a smile was on Linley's face. This battle was becoming more and more amusing.

Suddenly...

"Swish!" An enormous flash of lightning split the skies. The Thunder Lizard's enormous body suddenly appeared in front of Linley, and it reached out with its sharp claws at such speed that Linley couldn't dodge at all. It clawed viciously against Linley's body.

Linley's Pulseguard Defense was actually reduced by more than half in power, and Linley's body was sent flying.

"Bang!" The Thunder Lizard's eyes simultaneously shot out two bolts of lightning, striking against Linley's body.

Linley's body slammed against the wall, then slid down. "Bang!" The ground shook from the collision and began to crack, while a huge gouge appeared in the ground.

"This speed is monstrously fast, almost as fast as Bebe." Linley, in the ground, was secretly startled. "However, the Thunder Lizard's attack power is a good deal lower than the Tyrant Wurm's. My Pulseguard Defense was almost broken through, but in the end, it still managed to take the hit."

High speed, but somewhat weaker attack.

After all, if a creature moved as fast as lightning but had an attack as powerful as the Tyrant Wyrms, then it would be invincible.

“Is father fine?” Sasha was nervous.

“He’s fine.” Bebe could clearly sense Linley’s current condition. Laughing, he said, “I bet the Boss is actually really excited right now.”

Right now, the three Saint-level dragons were circling in the air above, staring at the ground.

“Bam!”

Linley suddenly erupted from another spot in the ground, shooting out at high speed. But just as he shot out, a terrifying beam of light suddenly shot out towards Linley’s head, carrying a terrifying amount of light-style energy. Linley’s heart shuddered, and he immediately dodged, but as he did so...

Just as the light touched Linley’s body, Linley felt a terrifying wave of force attack his soul.

This was a very familiar sensation. When Linley had tested for magical aptitude, they had used this ‘Overawe’ spell to test his spiritual energy’s strength. But the ‘Overawe’ spell, when used, was like a thin, snake-like ribbon of light.

By contrast, the Overawe attack this Gold Dragon was using was a ten-meter-thick beam of light.

“Light magic, ‘Overawe’? How can there be such a powerful ‘Overawe’ spell?”

“Haha, my turn!” The Tyrant Wurm, Plaket, charged down, and its terrifying draconic tail slashed through the air like a whip against Linley. This sort of group attack was one that these three Saint-level dragons had perfected. The Gold Dragon would use the ‘Spiritual Intimidation’ spell to cause the enemy to feel woozy, and then the Tyrant Wurm would deliver it a full-strength attack.

“Whooooosh.”

As the enormous draconic tail swung down, space itself began to tremble, and a terrifying howling sound wave blasted the nearby trees into splinters.

“Haaargh!” A furious roar emanated from the center of that gradually dissipating beam of light, and then the Tyrant Wyrms felt a terrifying force binding its draconic tail. The beam of light disappeared, and that Saint-level Thunder Lizard, Gold Dragon, and the distant Bebe, Delia, Taylor, and the other kids all saw a terrifying sight.

A human-shaped aberration, covered in deep azure scales, emerged. On top of its scales was a layer of azurish light that was constantly flowing around it.

This was the Dragonform of a Dragonblood Warrior who had reached the Saint level!

A peak-stage Dragonblood Warrior!

His arms were wrapped around the Tyrant Wyrms’ tail. The mountain-sized Tyrant Wyrms roared madly, trying to struggle to pull free its draconic tail, but it couldn’t budge Linley at all. This was the terrifying strength of a Saint-level Dragonblood Warrior.

“Haaaaaargh!”

With a powerful, explosive roar, Linley actually swung the draconic tail and sent the mountain-sized Tyrant Wyrms flying in an arced line before slamming heavily against the ground.

“Bam!” The Tyrant Wyrms’ body smashed heavily into the ground, which immediately cracked and shuddered, blasting countless boulders and trees apart as though they were made of tofu.

Submission

“Rumble.” The earth broke apart with many cracks appearing, and sand and stones slowly rolled into those crevices.

A mountain-sized indentation in the ground. The massive dragon shook its head twice, then stared at the terrifying creature that had stopped in midair. The dragon’s fiery red eyes were filled with disbelief. A peak Dragonblood Warrior! Those dark golden eyes swept down towards the Tyrant Wurm.

Silence!

The only sound that could be heard was that of the wind blowing, the leaves falling, and dust scattering. The Tyrant Wurm, the Thunder Lizard, and the Gold Dragon had all been stunned by Linley’s terrifying strength.

“Wow! Father’s awesome!”

The distant Taylor was beginning to cheer, while Cena and Sasha were excited as well. In Delia’s heart, she felt all the more proud of Linley. After all, this was her man! Bebe chortled and said, “These three Saint-level dragons aren’t bad. They’ve forced the Boss to use his Dragonform.”

Linley’s current Dragonform was different from how it had been in the past.

In the past, Linley’s scales had been black, but now, they were a fusion between ‘black’ and ‘azure’, creating a ‘deep azure’ color!

“Although I drank the blood of the Armored Razorback Wurm in order to activate my dragonblood in my veins, it was still the dragonblood that truly caused my power to increase,” Linley secretly mused. How could the energy in the draconic crystal of the Armored Razorback Wurm compare with the exalted lineage of the Dragonblood Warriors?

A pure Dragonblood Warrior, when transformed, should have azure scales like Wharton did.

Despite having drank dragon's blood, upon transforming after having reached the Saint level, the scales would still trend towards azure.

The massive body of the Tyrant Wyrms flew into the air, once more joining the Thunder Lizard and the Gold Dragon. These three dragons exchanged glances, then turned and looked seriously at Linley. They didn't have any of their earlier arrogance and boastfulness.

Linley had a better sense for these three Saint-level dragons as well.

The Tyrant Wyrms' power and strength wasn't any weaker than that of peak Dragonblood Warrior. The reason why Linley had been able to so easily grab the opponent's tail wasn't just through his strength; he had also used his Pulseguard Defense to reduce the opponent's attack power.

After transforming, the battle-qi in Linley's body was far more powerful than it had been in the past.

The Pulseguard Defense was naturally even more powerful after transforming as well. Using it to reduce the attack power of the tail before grabbing it allowed him to seemingly easily grab the Tyrant Wyrms' tail, then send it flying far away.

As for the Thunder Lizard...

Linley was certain that even after transforming, in terms of speed, he was still a level lower than the Thunder Lizard. But the opponent's attacks weren't very strong and thus weren't able to harm him. Naturally, the 'not very strong' attacks was only in reference to someone with Linley's level of terrifying attack power.

Gold Dragons...

This was a race of dragons that was extremely good at using magic. Linley was now certain of it. But what they had done just then was a simple exchange. He still wasn't too clear on the extent of it.

"Done chatting?"

Linley stood there in mid-air, his dark golden eyes staring at the three Saint-level dragons. In a bright voice, he said, "The three of you, do you intend to

fight me to the death, or just give me a little bit of draconic blood?”

The three Saint-level dragons had already come to a decision. Their leader, the Thunder Lizard, rumbled out, “Linley of the Anarchic Lands, your power has earned our respect. As long as you leave immediately, we can agree to not quibble about what just happened.”

Linley’s lips quirked upwards.

Twelve years of quiet training had improved his temper quite a bit compared to the past.

“It seems we will have to let our fists do the talking.” Linley clenched his fists, and a wave of deep azure battle-qi spread out around Linley, blasting wildly in every direction and causing the entire area to shake.

Linley’s dark golden eyes stared coldly at those three Saint-level dragons. “Come. I haven’t had a true, full-force fight in twelve years. Today... I’ll have a good bit of fun with you.” Linley’s draconic tail swished, causing the air to shudder with each movement.

The three Saint-level dragons all stared at Linley.

“That was just one of our simplest teamwork attacks. You had best not really believe you can beat all three of us.” The Thunder Lizard rumbled. “Linley, I’ll tell you clearly. The name of this technique is called ‘Lightning Flashing, Thunder Booming’.”

Clearly, this Saint-level Thunder Lizard was completely confident.

Linley stood there in midair like a demonic fiend, not concerned about the three Saint-level dragons in front of him at all.

“Rumble...”

The Thunder Lizard’s blue scales began to flash with lightning, and the air itself seemed to have become electrified as lightning snaked everywhere. At the center of it, the Thunder Lizard stared coldly at Linley... and then suddenly, a terrifying, enormous bolt of lightning struck towards Linley.

No. It wasn’t a bolt of lightning. It was the Thunder Lizard’s body itself!

“Haha...”

Laughing loudly, Linley instantly transformed into countless shadows as he began to move at high speed. The space around Linley seemed to have frozen, while at other times, it seemed to have folded and distorted. The area around him was totally blurred.

The Dragonblood Warrior, Linley, was constantly shifting about.

Relying on his understanding of the Elemental Laws of the Wind, he was actually able to dodge the Thunder Lizard's attack. The dragon passed by Linley, clearly not having hit him at all... but the lightning flashing in the Thunder Lizard's eyes became even more cold and sinister.

"Rumble..." A clap of thunder could be heard.

The thunderclap seemed to appear in Linley's area, as the Thunder Lizard's powerful draconic tail struck wildly and nonstop at Linley. The speed of the tail was far faster than the speed of the Thunder Lizard itself, and Linley didn't have time to dodge at all.

Because of the back-and-forth motion of the attacking tail, the nearby space began to be distorted, creating multiple terrifying thunderous booms.

The draconic tail attack was the real power of the 'Lightning Flashing, Thunder Booming' attack.

Linley's Pulseguard Defense retracted to the thickness of just twenty centimeters, but the power of the Pulseguard Defense didn't lessen at all. It was like an elastic membrane; each time the draconic tail slashed towards him, the Pulseguard Defense was able to neutralize over half of the force.

One or two hits, Linley didn't mind.

But in the blink of an eye, that draconic tail had whipped him a thousand times.

"This speed really is terrifying." Linley was truly speechless. He had never seen such frightening speed. A dragon's tail was also shockingly fast, and naturally, the tail of the speed-focused Thunder Lizard had reached an apex of speed.

"Is Father alright?" The distant Sasha was worried.

"Uncle Bebe, is Uncle Linley...?" Cena was a bit worried as well. They simply

couldn't tell clearly what was going on in the battle in the distance. All they heard was constant, awe-inspiring thunderclaps and countless lightning bolts appearing in the area.

Bebe grinned widely, revealing his white fangs.

"Beat it!" Linley let out an angry growl.

And then, with a clapping sound, the Thunder Lizard suddenly retreated at high speed, while at the same time, its draconic tail could no longer attack at high speed... because just then, Linley had landed a full force punch against the Thunder Lizard's tail.

The Thunder Lizard possessed powerful defense. An ordinary power punch wouldn't do anything to it, but Linley's punch included the 'Profound Truths of the Earth'. The cartilage and soft, flexible bones inside the draconic tail had been broken by the vibrations. The Thunder Lizard roared angrily, "Quick!"

The three Saint-level dragons moved in concert in a practiced manner.

"Groooooowl!" An angry howl erupted from the Gold Dragon's mouth.

The Gold Dragon had been collecting energy for a powerful attack this entire time. And now, a pure, thick, white spear of light shot down towards Linley from up high. This pure white spear carried with it a terrifying amount of force, and even Linley's face changed slightly.

"Light-style, forbidden magic – Holylight Lance?"

The power of a single-target forbidden-level spell was shockingly strong.

Linley didn't have the chance to dodge at all. All he could do was watch as the light flashed, and as it did, the huge white spear of light slammed against his body, like a sharp spear slamming against a tough shield. But this spear was the light-style forbidden-level spell, 'Holylight Lance'.

And the shield was a peak Dragonblood Warrior who had the Pulseguard Defense!

"Boom!"

Linley's body was sent flying into the ground. The collision between him and the Holylight Lance had caused invisible cracks in space in every direction, and

wherever those cracks in space passed by, the nearby trees and boulders turned into powder.

The cracks were like ripples in water.

Even the earth itself rippled once.

“Careful.”

Bebe immediately used a powerful amount of darkness-style energy to easily stop this omnidirectional ripple attack. Even at such a distance, the ripple still possessed tremendous force, and within a radius of several kilometers, everything had been turned into dust. Not even a single leaf could be seen.

Because the leaves had been turned to dust as well.

“Is he injured?” the Tyrant Wyrms said quietly.

“That was a forbidden-level spell. Even powerful Saints shouldn’t be able to take it head on. However, Plaket, since he was able to grab onto your draconic tail, most likely his defense is very powerful.” The Gold Dragon was somewhat uncertain and hesitating as he spoke. “But even if it couldn’t kill him, it should have badly injured him.”

“Prepare the final attack,” the Thunder Lizard said quietly.

The Gold Dragon and the Tyrant Wyrms immediately began to prepare. Their ultimate attack was a single combination attack using the power of all three of these Saint-level dragons. This combination attack was so strong that as far as they were concerned... there shouldn’t be any expert beneath the Deity level who was capable of blocking it.

The Gold Dragon’s massive mouth was mumbling, as though chanting the words to some sort of malediction.

Draconic-language spell!

“Bam!” Linley shot out from the ground like an arrow with grace and speed. Not a single wound could be seen on him. The defense granted to him by his draconic scales after transforming and by his Pulseguard Defense was terrifying indeed.

Just then, the forbidden-level spell had broken through his Pulseguard

Defense, but the remainder of the power of the spell wasn't able to damage his scales at all.

Suddenly, the world began to shake. An invisible ripple began to emanate from the Gold Dragon's body, then charged directly towards Linley. Linley instantly understood... in the past, Desri had used this exact technique to badly wound Lehman, the Commander of the Zealot Division, and knock him into the lake.

The ultimate attack of the Saint-level Gold Dragon – Soul Shout!

The Pulseguard Defense around Linley's body just barely weakened the power of this invisible ripple, which charged directly against Linley's consciousness.

Now...

In the mysterious depths of his consciousness, a half-translucent, seven-colored crystal floated, surrounded by an endless, ocean-like amount of spiritual energy. This endless amount of spiritual energy slowly flowed about it like water, but with a strange rhythm that seemed to carry the mysteries of the Profound Truths of the Earth within it.

If one was able to carefully inspect it, one would find that the spiritual energy surrounding that seven-colored crystal had an extremely faint layer of azure light protecting it as well.

Currently, that external burst of ripple-like spiritual energy was charging in wildly, with the target being Linley's soul.

“Bang!”

The Gold Dragon's most powerful attack collided with Linley's soul.

When the Gold Dragon used this technique, the Tyrant Wyrms once more began to emit hellfire from its body, while at the same time, with a thundering sound, its muscles and bones began to crackle and pop as it gathered a tremendous amount of force.

The Thunder Lizard was very confident. It was certain... that right now, Linley had already had his soul badly damaged. Even if he didn't die, he would be dizzy for a while.

In this sort of situation, Linley wouldn't be able to control his defense at all.

But just as the Tyrant Wyrms were preparing their most powerful attack...

"Swish!" Linley, who logically shouldn't have been able to move at all, suddenly transformed into a blur and struck against the exhausted Gold Dragon. With just one mighty fist, he smashed the Saint-level Gold Dragon out of the air and into the ground.

The Tyrant Wyrms and Thunder Lizard stared at Linley in shock.

Linley's dark gold eyes swept them with its icy gaze. His voice was calm. "Stop resisting. Plaket, I can tell that the power of the attack you are about to use is definitely ridiculously powerful. However, given your speed, there's no way you will be able to harm me at all."

How could the Tyrant Wyrms not understand this logic?

If he couldn't touch the opponent, what use was even the most powerful of attacks? They had thought that combining this attack with the 'Soul Shout' would be perfect, but Linley wasn't affected by the Soul Shout at all. The three Saint-level dragons couldn't believe what they had just seen.

Linley was secretly laughing.

"Spiritual attacks? My ancestors in the Dragonblood Warrior clan were able to reach the Saint level in just a few decades. They didn't have a high level of understanding, and their spiritual energy wasn't very strong either. There are many people in the world capable of 'spiritual attacks'. So why, then, was our Dragonblood Warrior clan so famous? Why would they be proclaimed as the strongest of Saints?"

The Dragonblood Warriors were the Supreme Warriors who had been blessed by the heavens.

Even Linley's ancestors, who had ordinary souls, no longer feared spiritual attacks upon reaching the Saint level. This was because once they Dragonformed at the Saint level, their souls would be protected by a unique, strange energy possessed only by the Dragonblood Warrior lineage.

This was what a Dragonblood Warrior was! The invincible Dragonblood

Warriors!

Glory

Seeing this godlike, invincible Dragonblood Warrior, the Saint-level Thunder Lizard, Gold Dragon, and Tyrant Wyrms all began to feel a hint of dread in their hearts.

Right. Dread!

Dread of Linley killing them. These three Saint-level dragons already understood that the Gold Dragon who possessed the most powerful magic amongst them was unable to harm Linley, while the physically most powerful Tyrant Wyrms wasn't able to match him in speed.

As for the Thunder Lizard, someone like Linley with such ridiculous defense was his greatest bane.

"Will we die?"

The three Saint-level dragons didn't know what to do. They didn't think that Linley would spare them, because at the beginning, Linley had been lenient with them, but then the three of them had used their ultimate attacks on him, trying to kill him.

Just then, they truly had wanted to kill Linley. Would Linley spare them?

The three Saint-level dragons didn't think so!

But just then, a calm voice rang out, which to the three of them sounded like music from the heavens. "Choose death, or choose to serve as my mounts for a hundred years." Linley's dark golden eyes stared at the three Saint-level dragons. Perhaps because of his twelve years of quiet meditation, Linley was now rarely moved to engage in slaughter.

The three Saint-level dragons were unable to deal with Linley. But they would be effective against people of Osenno's level.

The Saint-level Thunder Lizard, Gold Dragon, and Tyrant Wyrms all secretly

sighed in relief. Just a hundred years. To these creatures with an unending lifespan, that was a fairly short time frame. In addition, as magical beasts, they respected the powerful. Linley had defeated the three of them by himself.

Submitting to him wouldn't be considered a stain on their honor.

"Master!"

The three Saint-level dragons lowered their proud heads towards Linley. From far away, the watching Delia, Taylor, Cena, and Sasha all came over, riding on Bebe's back. The kids were cheering happily. Even the mighty Saint-level dragons, in the end, had lowered their heads to Linley, the one who the kids worshipped.

"Father, you are so powerful! Wow! Three Saint-level dragons!" Taylor screamed in excitement.

Sasha and Cena were normally calm, but upon seeing the three massive Saint-level dragons, their eyes shone and they were extremely enthusiastic as well. Bebe sneered, "You three stupid worms, why'd you have to fight against my Boss? You should've just admitted defeat from the start."

"Hrmph!" The three Saint-level dragons stared furiously at Bebe.

Only now did Linley speak out. "This is my dear brother, 'Bebe'. He is also a Saint-level magical beast. However, his power is far higher than the three of you. Bebe's speed is almost on par with yours, Thunder Lizard. He isn't that far off. But his defense and attack are both greater than that of the Tyrant Wurm's."

These words utterly stunned the three Saint-level dragons.

Was there such a monster of a magical beast in the world?

Speed almost on par with a Thunder Lizard, and power and defense even more terrifying than a Tyrant Wurm. How could this sort of magical beast exist?

"You are a rat-type magical beast?" the Saint-level Thunder Lizard said in a low voice, shocked as he stared at Bebe. They didn't doubt Linley's words in the slightest. An expert on Linley's level wouldn't lie to them.

Bebe nodded.

“But... but... your fur is black. Not violet.” The Thunder Lizard didn’t dare believe it. “In the Yulan continent, there’s only one type of rat-type magical beast at the Saint level... the legendary Emperor Rat of the Forest of Darkness. But the Emperor Rat’s fur is a violet gold color.”

The place where the most Stoneater Rats and Shadowmice lived was the Forest of Darkness.

“Violet gold?” Bebe suddenly understood. “Oh. You are talking about my friend. He is indeed an Emperor Rat.”

“A black Saint-level rat-type magical beast, this...” The three Saint-level dragons simply couldn’t understand it.

Bebe looked at Linley. “Boss, isn’t it time to be getting back?” Since they had the three Saint-level dragons as steeds now, they could go back and have Cena, Taylor, and Sasha rouse the dragonblood in their veins.

The Tyrant Wyrms rumbled, “Master, aren’t you going to cast the soul-binding technique?” Only by using the soul-binding technique would one be able to effectively control a magical beast. Since these three dragons had admitted defeat, they were willing to accept the restrictions of the soul-binding technique.

“No need,” Linley said calmly.

Soul-binding technique?

Based on what Linley knew, a person was only capable of having three magical beasts. If he wanted to take over another one, he would then have to release one of his other master-servant relationships with another magical beast. Linley already had two magical beasts. He would at most be able to take another one.

“No need?” The three Saint-level dragons were shocked. Three Saint-level magical beasts were presenting themselves to him, but he didn’t want them?

“I trust you,” Linley said calmly.

The sensation of being trusted was quite a good one.

“We three brothers have agreed to serve as mounts for a hundred years. We

definitely will honor our word.” The three Saint-level dragons felt a hint of admiration for Linley in their hearts. Seeing the three Saint-level dragons being so obedient before him, Linley felt a hint of nostalgia.

He still remembered when he was young, his father had led him to read the legends of his clan in the ancestral hall.

“Baruch, the very first Dragonblood Warrior of the Yulan continent. In the year 4560 of the Yulan calendar, outside the walls of the City of Linnan, Baruch did battle against a Black Dragon and a Titanic Frost Wurm. In the end, he slew both the Titanic Frost Wurm and the Black Dragon, causing his fame to be spread across the world. In the year 4579 of the Yulan calendar, along the coastline of the northern sea of the continent, Baruch did battle against a Nine-Headed Serpent Emperor. On that day, the waves crashed unceasingly and nearby cities crumbled, but after a vicious fight lasting a full day and night, Baruch finally executed the Nine-Headed Serpent Emperor... in the end, Baruch founded the Baruch clan, and became the first leader of the Baruch clan!”

“Ryan Baruch, the second Dragonblood Warrior of the Yulan continent. In the year 4690 of the Yulan calendar, in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, he defeated and subdued a Saint-level Golden Dragon, and became known as the Golden Dragonrider Saint! In the year 4697...”

“Hazard Baruch, the third Dragonblood Warrior of the Yulan continent. Born in the year 5360 of the Yulan calendar, in his very first battle, he fought fiercely with a Saint-level Bloody-eyed Maned Lion in the Mountain Range of the Setting Sun. He defeated the lion, forcing it to scurry away and flee, causing Hazard to become famous throughout the world...”

Linley still remembered how his father had looked.

That look of arrogance and pride.

Pride in his ancestors. Pride in being a descendant of the Dragonblood Warrior clan.

However, his entire life, his father had one regret. He had always dreamed of reclaiming his clan’s ancestral heirloom. Dreamed... that one day, he would witness the rebirth of his clan’s glory.

“Father... can you see this?” Linley murmured in his heart. “I, Linley Baruch, Yulan calendar year 10022 - went by myself to the Mountain Range of the Setting Sun and fought against three Saint-level dragons and then tamed them.” This record alone surpassed the achievements of his ancestors.

Linley could name himself the most powerful Dragonblood Warrior in his clan’s history without any shame.

“If only Father could see this...”

His father had desired his entire life to restore the clan’s glory. When Linley had become an Ernst Institute student, his father had entrusted him with the important tasks of recovering the clan’s ancestral heirloom as well as restoring the clan’s glory. And today...

Linley had done it all!

But his father was gone forever.

“Let’s go. Time to return. The three of you need to shrink a bit.” Linley sighed, then issued the orders.

Instantly, the three Saint-level dragons shrank in size to roughly ten meters or so, the same size as Bebe. With the three dragons in tow, Linley’s group began to fly at high speed due north, towards the Anarchic Lands.



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The Anarchic Lands. Outside Baruch City. Atop Mt. Blackraven.

“Big Brother, your actions really were amazing.” Wharton’s face was covered in shock and joy. “You brought three Saint-level dragons here directly to have them serve as mounts for a hundred years. In the future, our descendants won’t need to go find Saint-level dragons at all.”

Linley laughed.

Indeed, when he had decided to have these three Saint-level dragons serve as mounts for a hundred years, aside from increasing the Saint-level power on his side, part of it was indeed for the reason Wharton stated.

“Big Brother.” Wharton was extremely excited. “I have the feeling... that our Dragonblood Warrior clan is about to reclaim our glory of thousands of years ago. Didn’t you say to me that Hodan said in the past, our clan had dozens of Dragonblood Warriors?”

Linley nodded. “Right. Thousands of years ago, our Dragonblood Warrior clan definitely used this same method to produce many Dragonblood Warriors. Dozens of Dragonblood Warriors in one place... the stories of the Four Supreme Warrior clans being able to dominate the Yulan continent definitely weren’t just tall tales.”

How splendid his clan had been! One could just imagine it.

“Unfortunately, the reproductive ability of our Dragonblood Warrior clan is weak.” Wharton sighed.

Indeed. Linley’s grandfather had only a single son, Hogg. Hogg only had two children; Linley and Wharton. It must be understood... in many clans, there would be seven or eight children in each household. But the Dragonblood Warrior clan clearly was different.

Linley and Delia, aside from their twins, hadn’t been able to have a single additional child.

“The heavens have already been kind enough to us. If they also gave us many children... then nobody else would be able to survive in the Yulan continent.” Linley laughed, and Wharton laughed as well. Indeed, a person couldn’t be too greedy.

Linley instructed, “Wharton, let Cena and the other two kids prepare. Tomorrow, the Dragonblood lineage in their veins will be roused.”

Rousing the dragonblood was a major event. The next day, Haeru and Bebe both stayed obediently at Mt. Blackraven. The three Saint-level dragons, knowing this was Linley’s will, didn’t object at all. To these three massive Saint-level dragons, it was just a little bit of blood. It was nothing at all.

The Tyrant Wurm, Thunder Lizard, and Gold Dragon had all shrunk in size, and were looking at the three kids. Laughing, Linley looked at the three children. “You all know that once you drink live dragon’s blood and rouse the

dragonblood in your veins, the type of blood you drank will have a major impact on your transformation.”

“For example, in the past, I drank the blood of an Armored Razorback Wurm, which is why my knees, forehead, and elbows all sprouted the razor spikes of the Armored Razorback Wurm. And my speed was relatively fast as well. This, too, was thanks to the influence of the Armored Razorback Wurm,” Linley explained in detail. “Think well on your choice.”

Taylor, Sasha, and Cena were all considering this question.

The three of them could choose the same dragon, or they could choose different ones. For these three Saint-level dragons to give all three children blood was very simple.

“Taylor, which one do you choose?” Delia looked at her son.

Taylor carefully looked at the three Saint-level dragons, then focused his gaze on the tyrannical, indomitable Tyrant Wurm. “I choose the Tyrant Wurm. He’s so powerful. I like him.” Taylor’s words made the Tyrant Wurm very happy. “Indeed, I, Plaket, am quite powerful.”

“I choose the Gold Dragon,” Sasha’s clear voice rang out. “The Gold Dragon is so beautiful. Those scales are so slick, they look just like gold.”

“Beautiful?” Linley and Delia exchanged glances.

Their daughter had actually chosen the Gold Dragon for this reason? The Gold Dragon was relatively happy as well. In the past, he would have considered offering his blood as an insult, but now, his master was Linley. For his master’s child to select him meant that they liked him.

Dragons were proud creatures. They hated being inferior to others.

The Thunder Lizard immediately looked at Cena. Cena’s face was as graceful and calm as ever. With a chuckle, he said, “Then I choose the Thunder Lizard.”

Actually, no matter who they chose, the draconic blood would only have some impact at the beginning. The most important thing was still the Dragonblood Warrior lineage.

“The three of you, put the draconic blood into those three small buckets.”

Linley pointed to the side at three buckets that were large enough to completely fill one's belly. To the dragons, however, these three buckets were nothing at all. The Gold Dragon very straightforwardly cracked and plucked off one of its scales.

The Gold Dragon placed the scale above the wooden bucket, and a single drop of fresh blood, the size of a head, dripped down, instantly filling the bucket.

Discovery

The buckets filled with dragon blood were placed in front of the three children, and with a flip of his hand, Linley retrieved a large quantity of Blueheart Grass from his ring. The jade green leaves of the Blueheart Grass glimmered with that layer of faint blue light. Linley divided it into three parts, with each part having five clumps.

“Listen up, the three of you.” Linley looked at the three kids.

Cena, Taylor, and Sasha all stood attentively in front of Linley, listening to their elder’s instructions. Linley said, “In a while, drink as much dragon’s blood as possible, until your stomach is completely full. But before doing so, you must eat this Blueheart Grass. Logically speaking, three clumps per person should be enough, but just to be safe, it’s best if you each eat all five.”

“Eat grass?” Sasha wrinkled her nose unhappily.

To let a child eat Blueheart Grass, especially one who had been pampered all her life, would naturally result in some resistance.

“Sis, when Father was in his teens, he had to go all by himself to the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts to search for Blueheart Grass and drink the blood of the Armored Razorback Wurm. Father is now placing dragon’s blood in front of us. And you’re afraid to drink it?” Taylor didn’t have any concerns; he immediately grabbed the Blueheart Grass and began to eat it.

With big gulps, he swallowed it all down.

Seeing this, Linley couldn’t help but reveal a hint of a smile on his face. Linley was quite satisfied with his son, Taylor. Although Taylor was rather playful, he was able to work hard and endure bitterness, and he trained hard as well. Taylor wasn’t much weaker than the level Linley had been when Linley was ten.

Cena smiled, then grabbed the Blueheart Grass and began to eat it as well.

“Sasha, it’s fine. The Blueheart Grass’ juice is actually quite cool and refreshing,” Cena said enticingly.

“Oh?” Watched by her father, Sasha picked up the Blueheart Grass and began to chew it. As she chewed, her face turned bitter. “Big Brother Cena, you tricked me. The juice is cool, but the leaves make my mouth go numb.” Despite complaining, Sasha still ate it.

Linley and Delia were laughing.

“Glug, glug.” Taylor was the first to lift up that small pail of blood and began to pour it in his mouth. Taylor knew that the more dragon’s blood he drank, the easier it would be to activate the Dragonblood lineage in his veins, and so he drank it all with big gulps and no hesitation.

Cena and Sasha raised up their pails and began to drink as well.

“Glug, glug.” The three children drank dragon’s blood at the same time. This sight caused Linley to sigh endlessly with emotion.

The predecessors cut the firewood, and the successors will not fear the cold.

Linley’s hard work had made it possible for these descendants to not have to experience those life and death dangers.

“Ah!” The first one to begin shouting in pain was Taylor. The pail in his hand toppled to the ground, and Taylor was in such pain that he collapsed to the ground as well, rolling around. His face instantly turned white, and beads of sweat began to pour down his face.

Delia’s face immediately changed.

“It’s fine,” Linley reassured Delia.

Delia knew... that the first time a Dragonblood Warrior activated their dragonblood, they would involuntarily transform. This first transformation would be an extremely painful one. Linley had experienced this pain in the past as well... when the pain reached a certain level, one would pass out. And indeed...

As black scales sprouted out of his body, Taylor fainted.

Immediately afterwards, Cena and Sasha began to scream in agony as well,

both of them rolling around on the ground. Blue scales began to slowly emerge from Cena's body. The sensation of scales growing out of nowhere into his body was even more painful than being killed.

"If they can't even withstand such a little bit of pain, what can they possibly accomplish?" Linley quietly watched.

Shortly afterwards, Taylor and Cena had both fully transformed. As for Sasha, who had been the last to drink the dragon's blood, she finally began to transform as well. Taylor's draconic scales were black, as he had inherited the coloration of the Tyrant Wyrms. Cena's scales were blue, as the Thunder Lizard was blue.

As for Sasha...

"Linley, look." Delia seemed startled and frightened.

Linley had noticed Sasha's transformation as well. With a rumbling noise, two golden, butterfly-thin wings began to sprout from Sasha's back. This was what she had inherited from the Gold Dragon; it's two massive physical wings. But these faint gold wings made Sasha look like a celestial spirit.

However, those golden scales which covered her entire face made Sasha look very mysterious, especially given that she had that draconic horn on her forehead and that draconic tail, which gave Sasha's Dragonblood Warrior form a domineering aura as well.



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After a long time, the three children woke up. After waking up, the three kids excitedly stared at themselves and their transformations.

"Whoah, sis, you have wings?" Taylor stared at Sasha jealously.

Sasha liked her wings as well. They were part of her, like her hands. The two wings fluttered slightly, and Sasha gracefully flew into the air, excitedly shouting, "I can fly, I can fly!"

"I feel so powerful." Taylor excitedly punched at a nearby piece of rock, and

that rock instantly split apart into tiny pieces. A ten-year-old child who was able to smash rocks into pieces? No ordinary person would be able to accomplish this.

Cena was extremely excited as well.

“Whoosh!” Moving like a flash, Cena’s body left behind after-images when he moved. He was extremely fast.

Linley, Delia, Wharton, and Nina all laughed as they watched this.

“How marvelous.” The Saint-level Gold Dragon sighed in praise. “Dragonblood Warriors truly are incredible.” The three Saint-level dragons all sighed in amazement at this scene. The legendary Supreme Warriors really were amazing. They could already foresee... in a few decades, these three children would be three Dragonblood Warrior Saints.

After the three children got tired from playing around.

“Mother. Where’s my clothes?” Sasha said to Delia.

The transformation had badly damaged her clothes. Fortunately, Sasha’s pants weren’t damaged; they were just a little dirty. But her upper body clothes had been shattered by those two wings of hers. It was no big deal right now, in Dragonform, but if she returned to her human form, wouldn’t she be totally exposed?

Delia began to laugh.

Linley laughed as he said, “The three of you, listen up. In the future, focus on training in accordance with the Secret Dragonblood Manual. There is one thing, however... generally speaking, you are not to transform into your Dragonforms. In addition, right now, you are weak enough that even in Dragonform, your power won’t amount to much.”

“Yes, Father (Uncle).”

The three children assented.

“Wharton, I’ll hand these three children to you to manage.” Linley looked at his little brother. The three children should live in Baruch City. They were still young, after all. If they were to be made to live in a place like Mt. Blackraven,

where almost no others were around, the children wouldn't be used to it, and their temperaments would be affected as well.

"Alright." Wharton nodded.



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Taylor and the others went down the mountain. Two of the three dragons, out of curiosity, decided to go to the Baruch City palace as well. But of course, they shrank in size first. Linley and Delia remained on Mt. Blackraven, living a life of quiet training.

Most of Delia's time was spent with Linley. Naturally, she would also go to Baruch City to spend time with the kids.

As for Linley...

He might go for months or even half a year at a time without seeing the kids. Normally, he stayed on Mt. Blackraven and trained.

The sky was dark.

Mt. Blackraven. The stone room in the center of the lake. The inside of the room was carefully laid out, and Linley and Delia were holding each other on the bed. "Linley, have you ever asked Bebe to go inquire what that black stone was that he gave us on our wedding day?"

"I had Bebe go ask, but the Emperor Rat only said that it was something that was very good for training," Linley said.

Delia began to laugh as well. "Alas. I never thought my training as a magus would reach such a speed. My Big Brother is such a genius, and is being personally taught by the High Priest, and is now an Arch Magus of the ninth rank. As for me, I wasn't as good as him... but I reached the rank of Arch Magus of the ninth rank before he did. Every day, I feel like my spiritual energy is rising... even when I'm not training, my spiritual energy is slowly increasing. Even I'm scared by how fast I'm improving."

"Enough, don't overthink things. Whatever it was that Emperor Rat gave us,

we'll find out soon enough. Alright, it's late. Let's go to sleep."



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While Linley was quietly training at Mt. Blackraven and constantly analyzing the Elemental Laws of the Wind and the Earth... in a short mountain three hundred kilometers east of the Baruch Kingdom, two men were carefully inspecting the quality of the soil.

All kingdoms and empires needed their own mineral resources to be self-sufficient.

Before the Baruch Kingdom was unified, this region suffered from constant war and was under rapidly changing administrative controls. Today, you'd be in charge of this city; tomorrow, someone else might. Nobody had time or effort to find mineral deposits for mining.

Even if they found them, they would probably be attacked by the neighboring groups and end up dying.

Thus, no one ever went mining.

But after the Baruch Kingdom was founded, they focused on scouting and searching for mineral resources. Those surveyors carefully inspected every inch of the territory within the Baruch Kingdom. In the past twenty years, they had indeed found quite a few metal mines, such as iron mines, copper mines, gold mines, silver mines, and what not. Only, the mines were all of different sizes.

They even found some rather valuable mines, but the output of these mines was relatively low, such as the 'black iron' mines and the 'mithril' mines.

Having their own mines meant the kingdom wouldn't need to acquire materials for forging weapons from other nations.

"Chief, the soil here seems rather unique," a golden-haired man as skinny as a monkey said in a low voice. The middle-aged man near him carefully inspected the soil as well, then immediately ordered, "Kaya, let's go down and do some digging. Let's dig a bit deeper and see what is there."

“Yes, Chief.” The young man immediately brought out the tools and began to dig alongside the chief. Although they weren’t very strong, the young man was a warrior of the third rank, while the chief was a warrior of the fifth. Digging, to them, was very simple.

Their digging skills were quite practiced, and the deep hole quickly deepened without widening.

“Clank.” A piercing sound. It seemed they had ground onto some sort of metal.

“Chief, come take a look, quick!” that young man hurriedly said.

The middle-aged man immediately lowered his head to stare. Right now, it was the afternoon, and there was still quite a bit of sunlight. The middle-aged man could clearly see that something was reflecting the light of the setting sun, and he immediately used his hand to push away the nearby dirt and mud.

A half-translucent gem appeared before his eyes.

“This... this is...” The middle-aged man was speechless for a moment, then said in shock, “This is a magicite gem. A magicite gem. Kaya, it’s a magicite gem!”

“What?! Captain, we’re rich! We’re rich!” The young man’s eyes immediately shone with happiness.

Magicite gems were extremely valuable. In truth... magicite cores of magical beasts were very similar to magicite gems. Although they were ‘cores’, they were a type of gem as well. For example, the cores of dragon’s were also often called ‘draconic gems’.

But of course, natural magicite gems couldn’t have the terrifyingly high amount of energy that draconic gems had.

According to the normal market value...

A low-quality magicite gem – ten gold coins, equivalent to the magicite core of a magical beast of the third rank.

A middle-quality magicite gem – one hundred gold coins, equivalent to a magicite core of the fourth or fifth ranks.

A high-quality magicite gem – one thousand gold coins, equivalent to a magical beast core of the sixth rank.

A top-quality magicite gem – ten thousand gold coins. Naturally, it couldn't match up to the magicite core of a magical beast of the seventh rank, which was worth around fifty thousand gold coins. To find magicite gems or cores more valuable than top-quality magicite gems, one would have to go out and kill magical beasts of the seventh or eighth ranks, or even higher.

It could be said... that a magicite gemstone mine was more than ten million times more valuable than ordinary gold mines. This was because when engaging in gold mining, one had to pan for gold, and it was extremely time consuming. But magicite gemstone mines were different. They had large numbers of magicite gems clustered together...

It was as though a large number of magicite cores had clustered together.

In the Yulan continent, the only thing comparable in value to a magicite gemstone mine was a mithril mine.

“We’re going to be rich, Chief! We can fill up a bag of gemstones, and they’d easily be worth over a hundred thousand gold coins. We’re going to be rich!” The young man was wildly overjoyed.

The chief frowned. “Don’t be hasty. This should be a magicite gemstone mine... let’s take a look and see how large this mine is.”

Magicite Gemstone Mine

“Yes, Chief.” The young man suppressed his excitement, forcing himself to continue surveying the area with the chief.

“Here as well.” The chief’s eyes lit up.

“Chief, there’s magicite gems here as well.” A hundred meters away, the young man, Kaya, was extremely excited. The older man surveyed his surroundings, and then immediately ran next to Kaya, so excited he was panting for breath. “Kaya, this clearly is a magicite gem mine. We’ve discovered that it is at least a few hundred meters wide. Such an enormous magicite mine is rarely seen in the entire Yulan continent.”

Kaya nodded repeatedly as well.

Magicite gems. A single sack of them was more than a thousand times the value of a sack of gold. This definitely was an enormous sum.

Kaya looked at his chief, then scanned the surrounding area. Seeing that no one else was here, he immediately lowered his voice and whispered, “Chief, we’re both rich. We were able to find so many gems in the area around us. The price of the gems in this area alone has to be worth several hundred million gold coins, or maybe even more.”

The chief surveyor was also a surveying expert. Naturally he could tell how much this location was worth.

“Kaya, what are you trying to say?” The chief could already see the greedy look appear in Kaya’s eyes.

Kaya suppressed his excitement and hurriedly said, “Chief, think about it... what’s our yearly surveying salary? Now, as long as we keep quiet about it and don’t tell anyone, we can secretly excavate a bag full of gems, then sell them. Then we’d be rich! It would be possible for us to become two of the richest

people in the entire Yulan continent because of this mine.”

The more he thought about it, the more excited Kaya became.

There was nothing that could be done. Magicite gems were a hot commodity, and there were many channels for it to be sold through. In addition, even the lowest of magicite gems were worth ten gold coins. One could imagine how valuable this mine was.

“Kaya, calm down. Even if you have money, you have to be alive to spend it.” Just as Kaya was getting so heated up that it seemed to be summer, his chief poured a bucket of verbal ice water over him. Kaya shivered, then looked at his chief. “Chief, what do you mean?”

The chief said seriously, “You should know how tightly we surveyors are managed and overseen. Those senior people are always worried that we will find some valuable mines, then secretly steal from them. The kingdom is extremely strict in its oversight of us.”

Kaya sneered and laughed, “Chief, what are you afraid of? Yes, there is oversight, but all we need to do is to make one trip then leave and never return.”

“You are still too young,” the chief berated. “You should know that every day, there are records in the headquarters of the areas we have excavated. If we disappear, they would definitely come investigate this area. By then, they would definitely discover the magicite gem mine.”

“And secondly...” The chief looked at Kaya solemnly. “The kingdom has quite a few experts. Once the kingdom discovers what we have done, they would definitely pursue us. Our families would most likely get caught in the mix as well.”

Kaya suddenly remembered that back in Baruch City, his chief had a very good family.

But he, Kaya, was different. His parents had passed away a long time ago in the chaotic wars. He was all by himself, and hadn’t yet married. He had nothing tying him down. Kaya was very confident... that he could take away an enormous fortune, and live a life of luxury.

“Kaya.” The chief looked at him. “If we report this to the headquarters, the headquarters will reward us for discovering the mine.”

“How much would the reward be?” Kaya scoffed. “Ten thousand gold coins would be the most we could expect from them.”

Actually, ten thousand gold coins was an enormous sum already. An ordinary family only used a few dozen gold coins a year. Ten thousand gold coins was enough to allow an ordinary family to live off of for a hundred years. But to enjoy the life of a magnate... ten thousand gold coins truly was nothing.

“Hard to say. It depends on the size of this mine. If the magicite gem mine is fairly large, they might give us several tens of thousands of gold coins, or even a hundred thousand gold coins.” The chief tried to persuade him. “Kaya, the gold that the kingdom gives us, we can spend without fear, and we don’t have to be forced to leave our home.”

Kaya looked at the magicite gems in the hole beneath them, then looked at his chief. After struggling a long time mentally, he slowly nodded.

A hint of a smile appeared on the chief’s face.

The chief thought of his wife and his three kids. He truly didn’t want to make the kids go fleeing with him.

But just at this moment, a sharp dagger suddenly thrust out at the chief. Kaya’s eyes were filled with a hint of madness. “Die!” But as his dagger stabbed at the chief, Kaya suddenly found that he could no longer push the dagger forward.

Because the chief had seized him by the hand.

Kaya’s face instantly changed.

The chief stared at him coldly. And then, he exerted some pressure with his hand. “Crack!” Kaya’s hand and wrist was shattered. Kaya howled wildly, while at the same time attacking the chief with his left hand. Sadly... he was a warrior of the third rank, while the chief was of the fifth.

The difference was too great.

“Bang!”

The chief, with a simple punch, hit Kaya in the chest. A bone-splintering sound was heard while Kaya went flying backwards, slamming against the floor. Kaya's chest was caved in and blood was flowing from his mouth.

"You..." Kaya's life was fading from his body. He truly couldn't accept it... he had ambushed the chief at such a close range. Clearly, the chief had been ready for him.

The chief sighed as he looked at Kaya. "Kaya, if I was twenty years younger and didn't have anything holding me back, perhaps I would have made the same choice as you, to abscond with a large amount of treasure and leave and become a magnate. Thus, I understand how you are feeling."

The chief had guessed that Kaya would ambush him, and thus had been on high guard, and the battle-qi in his body had been activated as well.

Kaya listened to these words, and then his eyes turned dim. He had no life left in him.

The chief sighed and shook his head as he looked at Kaya's body. But he didn't mind too much; when he was young, the Baruch Kingdom hadn't yet been founded. He had killed quite a few people, and he was rather used to it. For the sake of letting one's self live a good life, far too many people had lost their lives.

The chief immediately covered up the hole with dirt, then turned and left at high speed to the nearby Nifeng City.

The news that the Baruch Kingdom's small City of Nifeng had discovered a magicite gem mine quickly spread throughout the kingdom. The area around the mine had been immediately sealed off by thousands of soldiers, forbidding anyone from going near it. They quietly awaited orders from the capital.

Mt. Blackraven.

Wharton was running at high speed through the mountain. He passed through the thick woods, then followed the creek to the place where Linley was training.

"Big Brother," Wharton called out from afar.

Linley, who was meditating in the center of the lake, couldn't help but open

his eyes. Seeing Wharton, a hint of a smile appeared on his face. “Wharton, what has you here in such a rush?”

“Big Brother, make a trip with me,” Wharton hurriedly said.

“Little Wharton, what’s going on?” Bebe popped out of a nearby wooded area.

Wharton explained, “Big Brother, in the eastern borders, our people have discovered a large magicite gemstone mine. Right now, the scope of the deposit is at least a thousand meters wide. And that’s just the surface layer. Exactly how large it is... hard to say. But even if it’s just a thousand meters wide, the value of it is definitely several billion gold coins!”

“Oh?” Linley was shocked. “There’s such a large magicite gem deposit?”

Magicite gemstones weren’t like iron or copper deposits. Magicite gemstones usually formed only after countless years of accumulating elemental energy. They would constantly compress it... and then finally take form. Some magicite gemstone deposits were only a few dozen meters in diameter.

“Let’s go, Big Brother,” Wharton said repeatedly.

“Alright, let’s go together.” As soon as Linley spoke, Bebe chimed in, “I’m going too.”

Wharton immediately laughed. “Bebe, if you go, I won’t have to Dragonform.” Wharton, being at the ninth rank, still couldn’t fly unless Dragonformed. But Dragonforming would ruin his clothes.

“Fine,” Bebe agreed easily.

Bebe’s body immediately grew larger. Wharton mounted on his back, and then the three of them flew at high speed towards the east. The current flying speed of Linley and Bebe was so great that in the amount of time it took to drink a cup of tea, they traversed the three hundred plus kilometers.

“Below.” Wharton pointed at the large area protected by a heavy guard.

Linley nodded slightly, and the three of them immediately descended. Seeing people fly over, the soldiers didn’t dare to be too rash. Their leader ran over. Sadly, this senior captain had never seen Wharton before.

“Are you... Lord Linley?”

Seeing Bebe shrink then hop onto Linley’s shoulders, many soldiers let out surprised shouts. This black Saint-level mouse had virtually become Linley’s insignia! He was a legendary figure in the Baruch Kingdom, its spiritual support!

Linley’s influence was tremendous.

“Right. I am Linley. This is Wharton, your King.” Linley laughed calmly.

Wharton resignedly stretched out his arms, which immediately became covered with azure scales. This was more convincing than any verbal proof. Dragonblood Warrior transformation... only the descendants of the Baruch clan could do this.

“Your Royal Majesty. Lord Linley.”

Loud voices rang out.

Wharton said calmly, “Enough. Keep guarding. My brother and I are going to scan this area.”

“Yes.” The surrounding soldiers raised their heads and their chests, keeping their backs straight. All of them wanted to make a good impression in front of their King and in front of this legendary Saint, Linley. Linley, meanwhile, had already begun to spiritually scan this area.

The nearby Wharton just looked at Linley.

“How huge.”

Linley was stunned as he delved deep into the ground with his spiritual sense. Spiritual energy could easily pierce through material barriers, but material barriers would still lessen the range of the spiritual energy much more than air did. After all, in the air, spiritual energy could scan at a range of ten kilometers.

But scanning solid, material barriers lowered that range to one kilometer.

“Big Brother, what is it?” Wharton said softly.

Linley cracked a smile. “It seems... I need to take this a bit more seriously.”

Wharton was astonished.

He instantly understood Linley’s meaning. This magicite gemstone mine was

so vast that Linley's casual spiritual energy scan wasn't able to fully investigate the size and scope of this deposit.

"Big Brother's spiritual energy is capable of covering a very wide area, even through the ground. How large is this deposit exactly?" Wharton's heart began to shake.

Linley was now using his spiritual energy to scan at full strength.

A full strength scan was very taxing on spiritual energy. Thus, unless there was some special reason, experts rarely would use spiritual energy on such a scale.

Finally...

Linley finished the investigation of this terrifying magicite gemstone deposit.

"How frightening. What a terrifyingly large magicite gem deposit." Linley had clearly discovered... this magicite gem deposit was an oval, round shape. But of course, in the area around the 'oval', there were still some scattered, random deposits.

One of the nearby deposits was fairly close to the ground, perhaps just three or four meters away from the ground.

This massive deposit was over twenty kilometers wide!

Even someone who had trained to Linley's level of understanding couldn't help but feel his heart rate quicken. Linley secretly let out a breath, then looked at Wharton. Wharton asked softly, "Big Brother, how is it?" Linley immediately walked to the side. "Talk about it over here."

Wharton and Linley came to a quiet, secluded place.

"Big Brother, how big is it?" Wharton was somewhat frantic.

Linley said seriously, "Very big... larger than any magicite gem deposit previously discovered in the Yulan continent. At least ten times bigger."

Wharton was shocked. After all, in the past there had been deposits that were one or two kilometers in size. To be ten times larger than those deposits..."

"This magicite gem deposit is at least twenty kilometers in length. In addition, it's very deep as well... based on my calculations, this magicite gem deposit

should definitely be worth at least several hundred billion gold coins.” Linley felt his heart tremble as he just thought about this number.

Several hundred billion gold coins?

“Good heavens.” Wharton found it hard to breathe as well.

Joining Forces

The largest magicite mine in the history of the Yulan continent was actually discovered by the Baruch Kingdom which had only been erected for twelve years.

“The Anarchic Lands have been an area of constant warfare and battle. In thousands of years, not a single power has had the chance to do some excavating and mining. I didn’t expect that in this area that I unified, we would immediately find such a large mine.” Linley couldn’t help but sigh with amazement.

But at the same time, Linley felt rather curious.

Magicite deposits were formed from a large amount of elemental essence that was slowly compressed to the point of taking solid gemstone form. To create such a huge magicite mine would require an enormous amount of natural elemental essence. Why was it that there would be so much natural elemental essence here?

But when Linley had scanned the area with his spiritual energy, he hadn’t found anything unique about the ground below.

“Not good.” Wharton’s face changed.

“What is it?” Linley looked at Wharton in surprise, and Bebe did the same as well. “Little Wharton, we just found such a huge magicite mine. Why do you say, ‘not good’?”

Wharton shook his head. In a serious voice, he said, “Big Brother, you say this magicite mine is worth hundreds of billions of gold coins. Aside from the financial aspect, the most important aspect of magicite mines is... they can be used in warfare. You should know this, right?”

Linley nodded.

“You are talking about magicite cannons?” Linley asked.

Magicite cannons were created from a sort of alchemy and metalsmithing. They allowed the usage of magic on a wide scale without requiring top-tier Arch Magi. In the past, the Holy Capital of Fenlai City had magicite cannons, but alas, on Apocalypse Day, even Saint-level magical beasts had descended, as well as a large number of flying beasts... this made it so that there was no time for the magicite cannons to begin firing.

In truth, magicite cannons were a type of extremely effective attack in warfare.

For example, some top-quality magicite cannons could consume a large amount of magicite gems and, with each blast, unleash power equivalent to a spell of the seventh or eighth rank, easily killing hundreds of people. On the battlefield, if one could emplace ten large magicite cannons and release a few blasts...

The enemy forces could instantly be reduced by ten thousand soldiers. This would have a huge impact on the outcome of the battle.

But magicite cannons were a bottomless, money-sucking pit. The amount of magicite gems they consumed was simply terrifying. In the past, when the Baruch Kingdom had unified this area, the enemies didn't use any magicite cannons, because an impoverished area like this simply couldn't afford to use them.

With each blast from the magicite cannons, magicite gems would be consumed. And these things were more valuable than gold!

“A small amount of magicite gems can be purchased by gold.” Wharton's face was solemn. “But a large amount would be restricted and monitored by the empires. They wouldn't permit any outsiders to purchase them. Although some people engage in smuggling, how much can that amount to?”

Linley nodded. How could a nation allow an enemy nation to purchase military supplies from them in large scale?

Wharton said seriously, “It is easy to buy magicite cannons, and in truth, given our kingdom's strength, if we spend some money, we can make our own. With

such a magicite mine combined with magicite cannons... our military power would become truly astonishing.”

There were still very few magi, after all. The testing procedure Linley had gone through in the past was testament to that.

After becoming a magus, to reach the seventh rank or even higher? That was even less likely. In the continent, only the great empires, the Holy Union, and the Dark Alliance were capable of forming entire magi corps.

Linley’s Baruch Kingdom didn’t have the ability to set up this sort of corps either.

But magicite cannons... ten large magicite cannons, if one had enough magicite gems, wouldn’t be one whit inferior to a magi corps.

“Big Brother.” Wharton looked at Linley. “You should know that in the continent, the four empires and the other kingdoms, in their struggles, will not use Saints unless it becomes a life or death war. If Saints do not get involved... then magicite cannons will have the ability to change the course of a battle. If the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows discovers that we now have the largest magicite mine in the entire Yulan continent, then...”

Linley’s expression turned grave as well.

His long time spent training had caused him to forget about worldly battles.

“You are right. Once the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows finds out, they might even join forces to attack our kingdom.” Linley sensed the threat as well now. In the past, they had agreed that in normal battles, Saints were not permitted to get involved.

Then...

How could the Baruch Kingdom, with a population of just a hundred million, possibly outfight the combined forces of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows, which controlled a far greater population?

The two sides dominated a larger territory than Linley as well, and those were richer areas with higher populations. The total population that the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows controlled was definitely in the four to five

hundred million range.

“Big Brother, what should we do?” Wharton looked at Linley.

Linley’s eyes shone with a cold light. “No need to overthink it. Right now, we need to come up with ways to buy magicite cannons. I’ll have the Dawson Conglomerate help out! And then, we need to, in strict confidence, begin mining. If the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows truly comes, then we’ll rely on magicite cannons to support our smaller army.”

“Alright, Big Brother.” Wharton’s eyes lit up as well.

Linley had already made the decision that no matter what, they could not hide or cower.

Soon, a large number of people were dispatched to this area to begin mining magicite. At the same time, a large number of soldiers remained on guard here. When mining, the miners were not permitted to engage in any outside activities. Naturally, their salaries were extremely high as well.

To outsiders, all they announced was that they had discovered a fairly valuable mineral deposit.

The Baruch Kingdom’s code of silence was quite effective. A full month went past without this information being leaked. However, the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows had quite a few spies planted in the Baruch Kingdom. Occasionally, some news would leak out. In the end, the Radiant Church found out the truth of the news from the family members of the miners.

Within a graceful, noble manor.

“The largest magicite mine in the Yulan continent? At least ten kilometers in size?” A silver-haired youth was reading the letter in his hands. His expression immediately changed, and the more he read, the more serious his face became.

This silver-haired youth seemed to be quite young, but in reality, not even Heidens and Osenno were older than him.

This was because... he was a Saint-level Angel of the Radiant Church. Three thousand years ago, he had descended to the Yulan continent. Although his power as an Angel had not increased, and his potential couldn’t compare to

humans, the long time he had spent here resulted in his intelligence and wisdom being as high as any human's.

Arfan, a Four-Winged Angel, the current leader of the Radiant Church's forces in the Anarchic Lands.

"Good news." Arfan's face revealed a hint of a smile, then he immediately instructed the person who had delivered the message, "Immediately go and leak this news to the Cult of Shadows. See what their response is."

"Yes, milord," the middle-aged man said respectfully.

Arfan nodded slightly.

If the Cult of Shadows was interested in attacking the Baruch Kingdom, that would naturally be a wonderful affair. Even if they didn't attack, informing them wouldn't be of detriment to the Radiant Church.

"Deliver this news to the Sacred Isle immediately. Let the Sacred Isle give us orders as to what we should do next!" Arfan ordered. He knew... the decision on such an important matter in the Anarchic Lands had to come from the Sacred Isle.

Soon...

The order from the Sacred Isle arrived.

Arfan read the missive. It was exactly as he had anticipated.

"Join forces with the Cult of Shadows and attack the Baruch Kingdom. We have to get at least a third of the magicite mine's output. That's our bottom line." The order was very simple. After all, many things didn't have to be said openly. As the manager for this area, Arfan naturally was no fool. For example, he would do his best to let the Cult of Shadows expend more energy and power.

Arfan smiled. He thought to himself, "It seems that it is time to reply to the Cult of Shadows."

A while ago, when he had sent someone to leak this news to the Cult of Shadows, the Cult of Shadows had responded quite quickly... they had immediately invited Arfan to go and discuss this matter. Arfan hadn't

immediately answered them, instead asking them to wait. And now, he had the Sacred Isle's orders.

Everything could begin now.

An ordinary, unremarkable little city. An ordinary little courtyard. The Saint-level Four-Winged Angel, Arfan, and the Senior Judge of the Cult of Shadows, O'Casey. The two were seated opposite from each other, drinking wine.

"Not bad. The taste and the texture are exquisite. It should be from the Yulan Empire's Blueflow Winery, right?" O'Casey laughed.

"Mr. O'Casey truly knows his wine." Arfan laughed calmly. "Let's not beat around the bush. Today, you have invited me here, Mr. O'Casey, to discuss the issue of the Baruch Kingdom's magicite mine. What do you wish to say, Mr. O'Casey?"

O'Casey winked at Arfan, then took a sip of wine in satisfaction. "Mr. Arfan, would you mind if I took some of this wine with me when I leave? I think I... have fallen for it."

Arfan frowned. He felt a hint of frustration.

But since this was a negotiation, he had to endure it.

"Mr. O'Casey, could it be that you wish to discuss wine with me until nightfall?" Arfan said seriously.

O'Casey looked at Arfan and began to laugh loudly. "Mr. Arfan, I was just jesting with you. Right. The Cult of Shadows does indeed have some thoughts regarding the Baruch Kingdom's magicite mine. However... we don't wish to engage in warfare against the Baruch Kingdom."

"You don't?" Arfan looked carefully at O'Casey.

What was this O'Casey planning? He didn't want to engage in battle with the Baruch Kingdom? Then what was the point of this meeting?

"Mr. O'Casey, what do you mean?" Arfan's face sank.

O'Casey smiled. "Actually, Arfan, you should understand. All we have to do is send some people to the Baruch Kingdom and say... 'the Radiant Church is preparing to attack the Baruch Kingdom, and has invited the Cult of Shadows to

come along with them. As long as the Baruch Kingdom is willing to give up some of the gems, then the Cult of Shadows is prepared to stay out of the game and help neither side. If you are willing to give up a bit more, we can even help you deal with the Radiant Church.’”

O’Casey looked at Arfan, who now had an ugly expression on his face. “Arfan, tell me. What would Linley and Wharton choose?”

Arfan was silent.

“The enmity that Linley has with the Radiant Church isn’t a small one,” O’Casey said freely.

Indeed. O’Casey’s words were correct. Linley’s side probably truly would be willing to give some magicite gems to the Cult of Shadows, or perhaps even a large amount to have the Cult of Shadows help them deal with the Radiant Church together.

The Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows were opposed to each other, after all.

Arfan knew that right now, the situation was very unfavorable for them.

“Mr. O’Casey.” Arfan looked seriously at O’Casey. “Do you know how much that magicite mine truly contains?”

“I don’t know, but it should be several times larger than the former top magicite mine,” O’Casey said. Very few people knew the exact size of the mine. After all, it hadn’t been fully excavated yet. Only someone like Linley who could scan the area with his spiritual energy could clearly understand the size of it.

But how would the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows dare to send a Saint-level expert and risk irritating Linley?

Perhaps Linley would immediately kill that Saint.

After all, in their previous agreement, they only said that Saints could not participate in battles. But Linley was still permitted to kill other Saints.

Arfan nodded. “Since you don’t know the size of the magicite mines, then even if Linley gives your Cult of Shadows a seemingly-large quantity of magicite gems, you won’t actually know what percentage of the total mine it is.”

“True,” O’Casey admitted.

Linley might only declare the size of the mine as being a fraction and worth only a few hundred billion gold coins, with the actual mine being ten times larger. After all, no one knew exactly how large it was... it would be easy for Linley to lie to them.

“As long as we join forces against the Baruch Kingdom, later on, we’ll split the magicite mine fifty-fifty, no matter how large it is,” Arfan said.

“Half?” O’Casey shook his head. “Seventy-thirty. Us seventy, you thirty.”

Arfan said coldly “O’Casey, don’t go too far. If we split it in half, we’ll be able to work and coordinate better in the future.”

O’Casey winked at him, then laughed, “Since that’s the case... then I’ll go help Linley’s side. We won’t have to risk a thing, and we’ll get a large amount of magicite gems.”

Arfan frowned.

“Sixty for you. Forty for us. One word: Yes, or no?” Arfan’s face was very grave.

O’Casey looked at Arfan, then raised his wineglass. Smiling, he said, “Mr. Arfan, come. Let us toast our joining forces!”

Arfan’s face revealed a smile.

“Cheers.” He raised his wineglass as well.

The Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows, for the sake of the enormous riches within that magicite mine, had joined forces. This was proof that there was no such thing as ‘eternal allies’ or ‘perpetual enemies’; only eternal and perpetual interests. And these interests could sometimes be money, sometimes be power, and sometimes be affection.

Calling the Troops, Summoning the Generals

The Anarchic Lands. The Radiant Church's territory. On a public road, an endless army procession was moving forwards, with military officers riding on magical beasts or powerful stallions barking at the soldiers in that massive, endless line.

"Move faster!" Brandishing their whips in the air, the military officers had very strict expressions on their faces.

A forced march!

They remembered the order they had been given. They had to hurry towards the prefectural city of Sherry as quickly as possible. Outside the boundaries of the prefectural city of Sherry was the location where the Baruch Kingdom and the Radiant Church were going to do battle. This was also the place closest to the magicite mines that the Radiant Church had access to.

The mobilization of this grand army couldn't be hidden from the Baruch Kingdom. Naturally, they had to move quickly.

Right now, at the boundaries of Sherry, twenty thousand soldiers had already assembled. These hastily assembled soldiers were permitted a day or two of rest after hurrying over here, and then they would also be sent to do battle.

"We're going to fight a full-on war against the Baruch Kingdom."

Within a quiet, secluded manor, Cardinal Guillermo was staring at the northern skies. The person responsible for this battle wasn't Arfan. It was Guillermo. After all, in terms of influence amongst the masses, Cardinal Guillermo had more.

And...

Saints were not permitted to get involved in this battle. Arfan would be useless, but Guillermo, as an Arch Magus of the ninth rank, would be able to

make a major impact.

“What a true pity. The young man who could’ve become of great use to the Radiant Church has become our greatest foe.” Guillermo sighed in his heart. He had personally watched Linley grow up, and grow from being a genius magus of the seventh rank to an expert who could kill Clayde, a warrior of the ninth rank.

After being dormant for many years?

He killed six Angels of the ninth rank, and then became an earth-shaking figure in the O’Brien Empire. And then... he founded the Baruch Kingdom in the Anarchic Lands.

“Twenty years have passed. This Linley is now so powerful that even the Praetor and the others are remaining in hiding in the Sacred Isle, afraid to come out,” Guillermo mused to himself.

“Milord?” A knight saluted him respectfully, calling out his name in a reminding manner.

Guillermo awoke from his musings. Glancing at the knight, he said, “Let’s go. Come with me to the border of the prefectural city of Sherry. Let’s go see the Dark Cardinal of the Cult of Shadows, and see if Dark Cardinal Weiss Porter has improved over the past few decades.”



*

The royal capital, Baruch City. The royal palace.

Wharton, Linley, Barker and the others were standing in a line in the main hall. There was a giant army map in the middle of the hall, and a middle-aged man was currently aiming a pointer on top of it. “Milords, the magicite mine is here. If it is just the Radiant Church that attacks us... the place we should choose to fight at is the prefectural city of Sherry.”

Linley and the others all nodded.

“However...” The middle-aged man shook his head. “Unless the Radiant Church’s commander has gone stupid, they won’t choose to attack here.”

“Oh?” Barker raised an eyebrow.

The middle-aged man continued, “The magicite mine is over three hundred kilometers away from the capital, while the prefectural city of Sherry is four or five hundred kilometers away from the capital. This is a straight line! If they had to fight their way from the prefectural city of Sherry to the magicite mine, they would have to travel nearly a thousand kilometers if they followed the road. On the road to the mines, there are over ten cities, large and small. The Radiant Church would battle us for a thousand kilometers, deep within our territory? Nearly half their forces have to remain in their garrisons with their borders with the O’Brien Empire and the Rohault Empire. Only half are available to attack us.”

“Therefore, our military strength is roughly on par.”

The middle-aged man pointed at Sherry. “At the same level of power, if we are to guard inside our city walls while they attack... and they are forced to fight through our territory for a thousand kilometers... they would be asking for death.”

“Therefore, if the Radiant Church wishes to attack us, they only have one option. Join forces with the Cult of Shadows. They have no other options!” The middle-aged man took a deep breath, the pointer in his hands slashing to the side. “The Cult of Shadows shares a border of over a thousand kilometers with us. The closest place to our magicite mine, without question, is right here!”

“The prefectural city of Cod!” The middle-aged man pointed at a spot.

“The magicite mine is outside the small City of Nifeng. Nifeng City is one of the small cities under the control of the prefectural city of Cod. From Cod to the mines is a distance of only a hundred kilometers.” The middle-aged man had a serious look on his face. “If they break through our defenses here, it would be smooth sailing for them to charge to the magicite mines!”

Linley nodded slightly.

This general explained things very clearly.

“Watts,” Wharton suddenly said. “If I were to give you full authority to direct the battle as you please, would you be confident in your ability to win?”

Barker also said, "In addition, I can also provide you with over thirty magicite cannons. I'll be responsible for handling the problem of bringing you the necessary magicite gems." Barker had a very high status in the Baruch Kingdom. He was the one and only Grand Marshal of the kingdom, and his personal power was also quite terrifying.

Soon after Linley had reached the Saint level in his human form, Barker had as well. Once he transformed... he was a peak Undying Warrior Saint. Barker, who already had mastered the 'impose' level, wasn't any bit weaker than Osenno.

Hearing that they had over thirty magicite cannons, Watts' eyes lit up.

Watts jutted his chest out and said firmly, "Your Highness, as long as you give me the authority to command our five hundred thousand soldiers, I have full confidence in my ability to hold our ground at the prefectural city of Cod and repulse the enemies."

"Very good." Wharton revealed a hint of a smile on his face.

The Baruch Kingdom actually had over a million warriors, not even counting the ordinary city guards.

"Your Highness," Watts said solemnly. "I'm worried... that the enemy will come with a force more terrifying and more powerful than we expected. If something like this happens and an irresistible force comes, standing our ground would be dangerous."

"A terrifying force?" Wharton was puzzled.

"Right. For example, if a Saint was to appear, or if one of the legendary, powerful magus corps of the Radiant Church was to be sent here, we would be in great danger," Watts said solemnly.

Both the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows had spent tremendous time and effort in cultivating their magus corps. These two sides all had powerful magus corps, and the weakest member of these corps was of the seventh ranks, while the highest were Arch Magi of the ninth rank.

A corps of over a thousand powerful magi, with several Arch Magi of the ninth rank commanding them, could cast terrifyingly powerful magic spells.

The power of such a corps wasn't one whit inferior to a 'forbidden-level' spell of a Grand Magus Saint.

This was also why, with the empires normally not permitting Saints to get involved in battles, magus corps had become a terrifyingly powerful force.

"The enemy Saints will not appear."

Linley spoke out.

Watts immediately looked at Linley. Seeing that it was Linley who had spoken, he immediately became very respectful. Linley laughed calmly. "Don't worry. Neither the Radiant Church nor the Cult of Shadows will send Saints out, at least. Also... as for those terrifying magus corps you spoke of..."

"If they want to produce forbidden-level magic attacks... don't worry, they won't be able to," Linley said calmly.

Although they had previously agreed that Saints were not to be permitted to get involved in battle, Linley knew exactly how powerful forbidden spells were. A single spell could perhaps destroy the entire prefectural city of Cod, and a terrifyingly high number of people would die. Linley wouldn't be so obstinate and stubborn as to allow an entire city's worth of people, over a million lives, to die because of an agreement.

Were the lives of a million people of less value than an agreement?

What's more.

These so-called agreements between countries were only binding and effective when nations were on equal levels of strength. If one side was overwhelming powerful, even if they ripped the agreement to shreds and immediately attacked, so what? This was something that was quite commonly seen in the Yulan continent.

But of course, Linley would only do such a thing if the enemy magus corps jointly cast spells to create an effect on par with a forbidden spell.



As the commanding general, information constantly flowed to Watts, and he issued one order after another to his subordinates.

The news that the Radiant Church's forces had arrived outside the prefectural city of Sherry quickly spread to him.

Could it be... that the Radiant Church really was going to attack the prefectural city of Sherry?

"The prefectural city of Sherry already had an army there. Send another army over. The two legions will have a total of two hundred thousand soldiers... stand your ground inside the city, and destroy the trees around the prefectural city of Sherry. Don't give the enemy a place to hide and launch ambushes against us."

"The prefectural city of Sherry definitely isn't the place where the enemy will launch their real attack. They are just trying to tie down our forces. All we need to do is stand our ground."

The Cult of Shadows acted exactly as Watts had predicted. Indeed... they soon joined the fray.

"The bridge ahead of the prefectural city of Cod must be destroyed. Also, the roads around the prefectural city of Cod must also be destroyed. Don't give any avenue for the enemy forces to easily travel towards us. Force them to attack Cod directly." This order did indeed cause quite a bit of frustration to the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows.

"Within the prefectural city of Cod itself, all the civilians must be relocated. The prefectural city of Cod must become a military fort and must be internally reconfigured for war."

One order after another came from the military headquarters, and they were carefully carried out by each of the supervisors in each location. An order came to the magicite mines as well. "Increase the level of production. Mine at the maximum possible speed. No need to continue to try and disguise your activities."

In the prior twelve years, the three powers in the Anarchic Lands had only engaged in small-scale battles. They had never engaged in something like today's struggle. Even before the battle started, the mobilized forces had

already reached a terrifyingly high number. Clearly...

This battle was not for training purposes. It was the real deal.

In the endless skies, a blue-robed Linley could be seen flying through the air at high speed in the direction of the Cult of Shadows. Linley knew where O'Casey lived; the headquarters of the Cult of Shadows in the Anarchic Lands, a seemingly ordinary Shadow Temple.

Linley's gaze was cold.

"O'Casey actually agreed to the Radiant Church's offer. Hrmph!"

Linley didn't understand this, but the Cult of Shadows actually had no choice either. If they helped Linley, then the Radiant Church's power would essentially be destroyed here in the Anarchic Lands. They feared that at that time, Linley would suddenly turn on them.

It must be understood...

Linley's side now consisted of Linley, Bebe, the Barker brothers, and Barker who had reached the Saint level in his human form. This Saint team was simply too powerful. The Cult of Shadows wouldn't be able to outfight them.

If Linley really did turn on them and ignored their earlier agreement, what would the Cult of Shadows be able to do?

They knew that Desri was actually biased towards Linley.

Linley's Saints were simply too powerful. Only if both the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows were present would Linley be cautious. Once one of the two sides were destroyed, then most likely both would be finished.

"Saint-level experts cannot participate in battles or kill ordinary people, but I can still kill Saints myself." Linley stared at the distant Shadow Temple. "I'll use death to threaten O'Casey. Perhaps that'll help him to wake up."

Linley used his spiritual energy to scan the entire Shadow Temple.

"Hrm, no one there?"

Linley frowned. The energy around his body began to roil about, and like a flash of lightning, Linley caused the window to shatter soundlessly to dust which

then drifted downwards. Linley entered the room.

“Where’s O’Casey?” Linley looked calmly at the golden-haired old man in front of him.

The golden-haired old man was one of the most powerful members of the Shadow Temple; a Saint. But he was only a mid-stage Saint, far weaker than O’Casey.

“Linley?” The old man smiled. “Lord O’Casey ordered me to wait for you here, Lord Linley. Let me introduce myself. I am a Four-Winged Fallen Angel of the Cult of Shadows.”

Linley looked calmly at the old man.

The old man’s attitude was very humble. “Lord O’Casey ordered me to inform you that this battle is unavoidable. As for Lord O’Casey himself, he has already returned to the headquarters of the Cult of Shadows. I am the only Saint remaining here belonging to the Cult of Shadows.”

Linley frowned.

O’Casey actually fled back home.

“You aren’t afraid that I’ll kill you?” Linley stared at the old man. A Four-Winged Fallen Angel.

A Beast of Burden?

Under Linley's gaze, the Four-Winged Fallen Angel only smiled. "Lord Linley is currently a ranking member of the most powerful experts in the entire Yulan continent. I think you most likely wouldn't lower yourself to attack me." The Four-Winged Fallen Angel was nothing more than a mid-stage Saint, after all.

Even twelve years ago, Linley and Bebe could have effortlessly killed this Four-Winged Fallen Angel.

"Help me send a message to O'Casey." Linley glanced at the old man.

"Lord Linley, please tell me what you need," the old man said humbly.

Linley said calmly, "He has chosen to join forces with the Radiant Church. This is an extremely foolish act. In the future, he will definitely regret it."

The old man nodded. "I will definitely convey your words to Lord O'Casey. However, I also want to tell you something, Lord Linley. In reality, in the Anarchic Lands, the threat you pose to us is even greater than the Radiant Church."

"Oh?" Linley laughed.

He understood their meaning. Right now, the only people who posed a threat to him in the Yulan continent were the Five Prime Saints. Linley's understanding of the Laws wasn't a match for those Five Prime Saints. After all, whether it was the Profound Truths of the Earth or the Profound Truths of the Wind, he had only reached the level of Higginson and Hayward.

However, the natural abilities of the Dragonblood Warriors were simply too great.

Dragonblood Warriors were ten times stronger than ordinary people to begin with. Thus, even though the Five Prime Saints had a much greater understanding of the Laws... if they were to truly fight against each other, it

would be hard to say who was stronger and who was weaker.

Neither the Cult of Shadows nor the Radiant Church had an expert capable of fighting Linley one on one.

Linley being in such a strong position naturally filled the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows with fear. Naturally, these two organizations would secretly have the desire to work together. After all, no matter how much territory they held... it was the experts of the organizations that determined their fate.

"I understand what you mean." Linley suddenly felt that the Four-Winged Fallen Angel was rather amusing. "However, I don't have much interest in territory. Your Cult of Shadows doesn't need to fear too much if you ally with the Baruch Kingdom."

The old man shook his head. "Lord Linley, an expert such as yourself isn't interested in worldly power, but what about your little brother, King Wharton? Even if your little brother isn't interested, what about the successors to the Baruch Kingdom? They will continuously expand their territory and have the desire to unify the entire Anarchic Lands."

Linley was briefly startled... and then he laughed.

"You are an interesting fellow." Linley chuckled as he glanced at the old man, then turned and disappeared from the room.

After Linley left, the old man secretly let out a sigh of relief. Although from start to finish, Linley hadn't acted against him at all, even just standing there, he had given the Fallen Angel a sense of dread... he understood that the difference in power between the two was simply too great.

Within the prefectural city of Cod. Right now, a large number of civilians were being evacuated. The prestige of the royal clan of the Baruch Kingdom was very high. Once the order came down, given how imminently threatening the chance of war was, these civilians all obediently evacuated.

Of course, their future homes would all be arranged for.

What was previously a three-story hotel had become the military command center for the prefectural city of Cod. Watts was standing in front of the third-floor window, staring down at the evacuation. In his heart, he secretly let out a

sigh. He understood... that the homes of these civilians would definitely be destroyed.

To make the prefectural city of Cod a military fort, many residential homes had to be destroyed, and tunnels and pits were dug everywhere.

Although the King had spent an enormous amount of money for the sake of relocating these civilians, for them to give up the homes they had spent twelve years establishing still deeply hurt these civilians.

“Under the unifying force of the kingdom, their lives are much better than twelve years ago.” Watts looked like he was a middle-aged man, but in reality he was in his nineties. He knew exactly how chaotic the Anarchic Lands had been in the past. The orphans alone were countless in number. From this, one could see how brutal the wars had been.

Suddenly, the sound of knocking could be heard.

“Enter,” Watts said calmly.

“Milord, the Grand Marshal has come,” the soldier reported immediately upon entering.

“His Lordship, the Grand Marshal?” Watts immediately said. “Then quick, bring me to him.”

The citizens of the Baruch Kingdom all naturally worshipped those talented, powerful experts who supported the kingdom. The number one person was of course Linley. After him was his Majesty, King Wharton, and then... the leader of the five wargods, the Undying Warrior Saint, Barker.

Within a courtyard behind the hotel.

Barker was seated, enjoying some wine by himself, when Watts ran in and delivered a military salute. “Lord Grand Marshal!” Barker raised his head and glanced at him, then chuckled, “Oh, it’s Watts. Come on over. Be at ease.”

Over the past twelve years, the kingdom had discovered many talented people.

Barker and his brothers normally spent their time training. They rarely got involved in other matters. Watts, however, was a very promising prospect

whom Barker had discovered.

“Come, drink.” Barker poured Watts a cup of wine.

Watts asked, “Lord Grand Marshal, the purpose of your journey this time is...?”

Barker laughed. “Didn’t I tell you last time? I told you I’d bring you over thirty magicite cannons.” Watts’ eyes immediately lit up. Barker continued, “I brought a total of thirty-six. These thirty-six magicite cannons have already been prepared.”

“Already prepared?” Watts was worried. “But how would you bring them over? Lord Grand Marshal, those magicite cannons must be in a distant location. Bringing them over will take a huge amount of time. Will we have enough time?”

Barker shook his head and laughed. “For the sake of these magicite cannons, I spent all day travelling.”

Watts was confused.

What did the Grand Marshal mean?

Barker waved his hand in the direction of some empty space in the courtyard.

Instantly, one magicite cannon after another appeared out of thin air. They were divided into four rows, with nine magicite cannons in each row. Each of them were two or three meters long, and the width of the cannon mouths were roughly half a meter. The cannons were covered with complicated magical runes.

Beneath the sunlight, the magicite cannons gleamed with a mesmerizing light.

Thirty six magicite cannons.

“This... this...” Watts was excited.

“Watts, haven’t you heard of interspatial rings?” Barker snickered. “Fortunately, mine is pretty big. It was just able to squeeze these thirty-six magicite cannons. However, for the sake of these thirty-six magicite cannons, I ran around half the Yulan continent and flew for a whole day. Only then did I manage to collect them all and bring them here.”

These thirty-six magicite cannons were all large-caliber cannons.

The size of the cannon mouths and the complicated runes on them were proof of the level of these cannons. Cannons on this level generally couldn't be bought from the various empires, but through the connections of the Dawson Conglomerate, they were able to get quite a few.

Through storing them in his interspatial ring, Barker was able to easily bring them all over.

"These thirty-six magicite cannons are equivalent to thirty-six magi of the eighth rank, and they have virtually limitless mageforce." Barker laughed. Most magi of the eighth rank could only use spells of the eighth rank three times before running out of mageforce.

Even if they had powerful magistaffs, they would perhaps only be able to cast them four or five times.

But these magicite cannons could continue to attack ceaselessly so long as they had magicite gems to fuel them.

"Lord Grand Marshal, with these thirty-six magicite cannons, if we use them correctly, they would definitely be able to match the effect of hundreds of thousands of soldiers." Watts' face was filled with irrepressible excitement, and then he laughed. "But of course, I would need enough magicite gems."

Magicite cannons burned through money.

With each blast, it was as though gold coins were being shot out of the cannon. Without enough wealth, who would be willing to use them?

"Don't worry. Soon, the magicite gems will be brought over as well," Barker said with certainty.

"Our enemies are over a million in number. When the battle starts, these thirty-six magicite cannons will definitely use up an astonishing amount of magicite gems." Watts looked at Barker. "Lord Grand Marshal, to bring over such a high amount of magicite gems will most likely need many people."

Barker nodded.

He could store the magicite cannons in his interspatial ring, but the size of the

ring was limited. If he wanted to move a large amount of magicite gems, his interspatial ring would be too small. He'd have to make over ten trips.

At the magicite mines, they no longer worked under any disguises or pretenses, since the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows had already mobilized their armies. They were excavating at full-speed. These magicite mines weren't like copper or iron mines.

Those materials needed to be smelted. It was a great deal of work.

But magicite gems only needed to be washed, and then they would be divided into grades. They were one of the easier types of minerals to mine for. The only thing difficult about them... was that magicite gems were very tough.

The higher the level of magicite gem, the tougher they were, far more so than ordinary stones.

Ordinary tools wouldn't be able to dig them out at all.

These miners were all specially selected. They had at least the strength of a warrior of the third rank. Their strength, combined with some special excavating tools, just barely allowed them to dig the gems out.

"Clang!" "Clang!" "Bang!" ...

Digging sounds rang out nonstop. Many people were here digging. Although they weren't individually fast, all added together, the result was that bags stuffed with magicite gems were constantly being brought out, then divided by level into piles.

It had been two months since they had started mining.

Despite that, they had only finished digging out part of the mine.

"What's going on? They told us to bring such a huge iron chest and store magicite gems in it. Such a huge iron chest, if used to hold magicite gems, would weigh several million pounds. How would we possibly deliver them?" The garrison troops stared at those enormous metal boxes which were fifty meters long, thirty meters wide, and thirty meters tall. They were all puzzled.

These boxes were very sturdy. Why use such huge iron boxes to store magicite gems?

Although a single magicite gem wasn't too heavy, a full box of them would definitely be several million pounds in weight. Several million pounds' worth of magicite gems... how would ordinary troops possibly move them? It wouldn't be so bad if they were divided into smaller shipments, but all together...

Not even an interspatial ring would be able to hold such a large amount.

After having mined for two months, the amount of magicite gems they had mined had finally filled this massive chest. They used a large amount of steel chains to bind the entire chest securely. Every single chain was a meter thick, and there were dozens around the chest.

"Later, giant dragons will come to move the chest. All of you be quiet. Don't cause too much of a ruckus," the military officer's order came out.

Giant dragon?

All of the soldiers stared in the sky as they waited.

It was late at night. The full moon hung high in the sky.

Indeed, a massive Tyrant Wyrms over a hundred meters long appeared in the sky. The soldiers below felt the world grow dark, and the natural, awesome presence of the Tyrant Wyrms made the pulses of these soldiers speed up. The hundred-meter-long Tyrant Wyrms landed on the ground.

"Master had me, a noble Saint-level dragon, to carry things for him. Jeeze..." The Tyrant Wyrms, Plaket, secretly sighed.

His fiery, cart-sized eyes swept the nearby soldiers with a glance. His massive nostrils snorted, then his two draconic claws grabbed those sturdy chains. The massive Tyrant Wyrms easily lifted that iron chest that weighed millions of pounds into the air. Beneath the glow of the moonlight, it flew off with the massive chest towards the south, in the direction of the prefectural city of Cod.

The Call to Assemble

The prefectural city of Cod was a city with several hundreds of thousands of citizens and which took up a huge amount of space. Given the local geography as well as the intentional destruction caused by the Baruch Kingdom's forces, the Radiant Church's side was forced to attack the city from the south and the east gates.

The north gate was actually open, as they had no fear of the enemy attacking from that side.

The day slowly grew bright, and many soldiers who had been on guard duty at night switched shifts. Logically speaking, there should have been fewer soldiers outside in the morning, but the new shift discovered to their surprise... that there were many people outside, and it seemed as though the soldiers that had been on duty weren't tired at all. Instead, they were excited.

"Buddy, time to change shifts. What are you guys talking about?"

Many soldiers ran to their shift changing positions.

"A titanic dragon, a titanic dragon. It had no wings, but it was able to fly. It was a Saint-level titanic dragon. Wow. It was so huge. It was like a mountain." The night-shift garrison soldiers were talking excitedly amongst themselves.

"What dragon?" The new arrival was shocked.

The night-shift garrison soldier explained excitedly, "Last night, an enormous dragon flew over... there were a lot of soldiers waiting to move things. Look, they're still moving things. That enormous metal case was delivered by the flying dragon."

The new arrival looked over.

He saw a massive box at least fifty meters long. He sucked a cold breath. How could people possibly move such an enormous box? Perhaps it truly was a

massive dragon that had carried it here.

A large number of soldiers were currently right in the middle of the metal box, carrying out bulging sacks.

The news about the giant dragon quickly spread throughout the army camp, causing the morale of the soldiers of Cod to rise. Their side had the help of a massive dragon, and a Saint-level one who could fly, at that. They would definitely be successful.

But the enemy forces, by contrast...

The Liuyan River was a fairly large river. Although it wasn't one of the top three rivers of the Anarchic Lands, it was still fifty or sixty meters wide, and caused endless headaches for the forces of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows.

The bridge that had been erected at enormous expense had been destroyed by the Baruch Kingdom itself.

Building it was hard, but destroying it was simple.

The Cardinal of the Radiant Church, Guillermo, and the Dark Cardinal of the Cult of Shadows, Weiss Porter, stared at the river, frowning. To build a floating bridge was simple, but how could a million-man army possibly cross on such a floating bridge?

In addition, some of their war machines were extremely large. How would they ship them across?

"We have to immediately build a large number of floating bridges to let the soldiers cross," Guillermo frowned, urging.

"Then what about the war machines?" someone below asked.

To attack a city, one had to use war machines such as the escalades, which were dozens of meters wide. How could something so large and so heavy be shipped across? But building a large bridge would take an enormous amount of time; even the time it would take to let the cement settle down and harden would be time consuming.

There wasn't enough time.

“When the time comes, magic will have to be used to freeze the water into ice.” Guillermo frowned.

It was currently August, the hottest time of the year. In addition, this was a very large river. To freeze the river solid enough to allow the escalades and the other large war machines to cross would require at least an Arch Magus of the ninth rank.



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The prefectural city of Cod was constantly being renovated as well, preparing all sorts of war machines of its own. The Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows continued to plan ways to bring across their million-man-army. In the Anarchic Lands, warfare was about to break out at any moment.

At this time...

The O’Brien Empire. War God Mountain.

“Whooosh.”

The War God, O’Brien, suddenly appeared at the door to his cave. The War God, O’Brien, stood there, as straight as a spear, emanating a fierce air. His scarlet red hair fluttered freely, and a hint of a smile was on his face.

It had been a long time since he had left the cave.

A flash of light suddenly appeared in front of him. It was Fain.

“Master.” Fain stood respectfully in front of the War God, O’Brien. The War God, as soon as he had stepped outside, had summoned Fain.

The War God glanced at his disciple. “Fain, spend the next period of time in training and in preparation...” The War God’s voice trailed off, but Fain’s eyes lit up. He looked at his master. “Master, are you saying...?”

“Right. It should be starting again soon... because that person in the Forest of Darkness has instructed me to go to him.” The words of the War God O’Brien made Fain’s heart begin to tremble.

Fain knew that the Deity in the Forest of Darkness rarely got involved in any

matters. For him to now have the War God go over most likely meant... it was time to once again open the Necropolis of the Gods.

The War God O'Brien immediately transformed into a fiery streak of light, flashing across the sky and quickly disappearing into the eastern horizon. His speed was simply astonishing, far beyond the likes of Linley and the others.

On a mountain peak in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts.

A devilish youth with dark-golden eyes and a long robe stood on the peak, staring at the east. There was a knife-scar in the middle of his forehead. Only people who knew him were aware... that this wasn't actually a knife scar. It was the powerful weapon of the King of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts.

The King of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts... Dylin!

"Hrmph, that old bastard." Dylin stared towards the east. He had received the summons from that person in the Forest of Darkness as well. Although Dylin disliked him, he didn't dare to disobey either. "He was like this five thousand years ago, and now, he's still like this. The Yulan continent... that old bastard is the most comfortable person here."

"Swish."

Dylin's body flashed, and a dark golden light streaked toward the eastern horizon, then disappeared. The speed... seemed to be even more astonishing than that of the War God O'Brien.

On a cloud-shrouded peak near the imperial capital of the Yulan Empire.

Long silver hair flowing freely. A shining jade mask. Moon-white robes. The person looked like an Angel who didn't belong in this world, or perhaps a spirit. But from the figure... this person seemed very willowy. The person looked somewhat like a woman.

This was the oldest human Deity in the Yulan continent, the pillar of support for the Yulan Empire... the High Priest!

"Is it beginning?" The High Priest stared towards the northeast. The glowing jade mask caused his face to be hidden. "Who knows how many people will die this time." The High Priest let out a sigh, and then a wind arose nearby.

When the wind died down, the High Priest had disappeared as well.

Within a graceful entertainment area in the Rohault Empire.

“C’mon, give me a kiss.” Still dressed in a loose robe, and that lazy smile still on his face, Cesar was currently cuddling a beautiful woman, teasing her while drinking wine. But just as they were having fun, his face suddenly froze. “Leave for now.” Cesar waved his hand.

The beautiful woman clearly was confused.

“I told you to leave.” Cesar frowned. The slight aura he was now emanating made the woman’s heart quail, and she immediately left, not daring to protest.

Frowning, Cesar let out an unhappy grumble. “The Forest of Darkness... oh, your Lordship, your mightiness, someone like you has no need for a minor figure like me. I just reached the Deity level not too long ago. Why do I have to go with you.”

Although he was annoyed, Cesar didn’t dare to disobey.

His five thousand years of life had let Cesar know quite a bit about the background history of the Yulan continent.

A black shadow flashed, and Cesar disappeared as though he had teleported. If Bebe and Osenno had seen this... they would have been shocked. For someone to be able to reach such a level in the Shadowshape technique was simply too terrifying.

In the air above the Forest of Darkness, the four great Deities flew together, side by side. Sonic booms could be heard continuously. The War God O’Brien, his gaze firm. The quiet, natural High Priest. The cold, devilish Dylin. And the rather lazy, unhappy-looking Cesar who flew a bit farther away from the others.

“Cesar, why the unhappy face? You are a Deity now. You should be happy.” The gentle voice of the High Priest rang out.

Cesar forced out a smile. “Lord Catherine, I just reached the Deity level not long ago. When we meet with any danger, I hope you will help me, Lord Catherine. Otherwise, my little life might be over.”

“Your little life will be over?” The War God’s firm, powerful voice rang out,

and he swept Cesar with a lightning gaze. “You have entered the Deity level, and you train in the assassination and escaping aspects of the darkness-element. Amongst the four of us, your escaping ability should be the greatest.”

Cesar could only let out a few resigned chuckles.

As for the King of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, Dylin, he flew silently.

“Dylin.” The High Priest looked at him, speaking with a voice that was warm and friendly, “Congratulations on escaping from the Gebados Prison. I must say, your luck is quite good.”

Dylin glanced at the High Priest. “Catherine, my luck isn’t as good as yours.”

Just as these people were chatting...

“Enough. There will be plenty of time to chat later. Hurry up,” a hoarse, ancient voice suddenly rang out in the ears of the four Deities. The four Deities immediately increased their speed, transforming into rays of light as they entered the depths of the Forest of Darkness.

Across the Yulan continent, the vast majority of Saints, such as Linley and Desri, didn’t know that the five Deities were coming together in the Forest of Darkness. Linley was actually in the prefectural city of Cod. The upcoming battle was simply too important.

But soon after Linley arrived at the prefectural city of Cod...

“Lord Linley.” Barker suddenly ran over.

“What is it, Barker?” Linley smiled at Barker, who hurriedly said, “Lord Linley, come take a look with me. Someone told me that there was a change in the magicite mines. I took a look and I discovered something incredible.”

“Oh?” Linley was curious now. “Come, let’s take a look.”

Linley immediately followed Barker as they flew to the magicite mine at high speed. Currently, parts of the magicite mines had been sealed off, preventing anyone from going in deeper to investigate. When Barker and Linley arrived, those soldiers immediately withdrew.

“Right here.” Barker led Linley inside.

They went deeper into the mines, which was lit by torches. Barker explained, "Someone told me that when we excavated our way deep into the heart of the mine, we discovered that the quality of the magicite gems increased by a terrifying level. They are better than what the historical standard for 'top-class' magicite gems are at, but they are still terrifyingly tough. That's why I came.

Linley instantly spread out his spiritual energy.

Linley suddenly discovered... that at the end of the excavation, there was a spherical nuclear area. This was the center of the mine.

"You say that the quality of the magicite gems reached a terrifyingly good level?"

"Right. From what I could tell, the quality of the magicite gems here are comparable to the cores of magical beasts of the seventh rank, and some deeper inside can even compare to magicite cores of beasts of the eighth rank. A very small number can even compare to the magicite cores of magical beasts of the ninth rank." Barker sighed in amazement.

Linley's heart trembled in shock.

"Linley, do you know what this core of the mine is?" Barker asked.

Linley shook his head. He had just discovered many magicite gems clustered around this area when he had used his spiritual energy, but he couldn't find out anything else at all.

"We're here." Barker pointed to the front.

The sides of the excavation area were filled with half-translucent gems that carried a terrifying amount of force. Any of them could compare to the magicite cores of magical beasts of the seventh rank. Linley look ahead; Barker was pointing in the direction of... a door.

This door had a strange spatial ripple in front of it.

But just earlier, when Linley had used his spiritual energy to search, he hadn't discovered this door at all.

The Door

Hunting magical beasts of the eighth and ninth ranks was an extremely difficult task. One could imagine how valuable their magicite cores were. However, the gems in these magicite mines had actually reached the equivalence of the seventh-and eighth-ranked magicite cores, with some even comparable to magicite cores of the ninth rank.

Under the light of the torch, the semi-translucent magicite gems produced a bewildering pattern of lights.

And yet, at the end of the mining tunnel was a door.

A door that should not have existed.

“I cannot find this door with my spiritual energy. It is as though it does not exist. What is this door?” Linley was surprised and puzzled. His spiritual energy couldn’t penetrate past this door at all. How could he dare to rashly barge in?

Linley turned to look at Barker. “Barker, did you go in yet?”

Barker nodded. “I did. It was precisely because I went in that I felt shocked.”

“But Lord, it’s best if you go in after transforming. When you step past the door, you will be attacked by a powerful surge of energy. If your defense is insufficient... the door alone will kill intruders,” Barker said solemnly.

Linley was secretly shocked.

Barker was an Undying Warrior Saint, the type of Supreme Warrior with the highest defense. For him to say this... one could imagine how powerful the attack was.

After removing his shirt and baring his upper body, Linley immediately Dragonformed. Instantly, his body was covered by deep azure draconic scales, and he stared at this mysterious ‘door’ with his now dark golden eyes before walking in.

“Slaaaaaaaaaash.”

A knife-like surge of energy wildly chopped at Linley as soon as he walked in the door, slashing at him millions of times, creating sparks atop of Linley’s deep azure draconic scales.

“This is...” As soon as Linley entered, he felt shocked. The scene within the door was totally contrary to Linley’s expectations. Behind the door... was a translucent ‘bubble’ of a pocket dimension. This pocket dimension was a spherical dimension, only ten meters long.

A spherical dimension, ten meters long.

And this spherical dimension was organized like a training room. It only had a simple desk, bed, and chair. It was protected by that outer barrier, preventing outsiders from easily coming inside.

Raising his head and staring at the air above, then at his surroundings, he saw that outside the membrane was chaotic space.

Multicolored chaotic space, with rips in reality occasionally appearing and disappearing. Linley felt awed just looking at that terrifying power.

“Lord Linley.” Barker entered as well. “When I came here, I also felt it was hard to believe. Tell me, what do you think this is?”

Linley took a deep breath. “From what I know, the countless planes of existence are all held within chaotic space. For example, in the Yulan continent, if you continue to head a direction to the very end... you will be able to see chaotic space. Once your strength reaches a certain level, you might be able to open your own pocket dimension within the chaotic space.

Linley carefully inspected this spherical dimension.

“And this spherical dimension that seems like a training room is most likely something that an extremely powerful expert created for training. This expert is most likely of the Yulan continent. Or perhaps it would be better to say... he used to be.”

Linley was filled with nothing but the utmost of admiration for the expert who had created this pocket dimension.

“Create a pocket dimension?” Barker sighed in amazement as well.

“Didn’t the Four Overgods create the Four Higher Planes? Didn’t the Seven Principal Sovereigns create the Seven Divine Planes?” Linley laughed. “There are experts capable of opening their own pocket dimension.”

Linley understood that even Demigods only had the most rudimentary ‘Godrealm’ technique.

Someone who could create a stable pocket dimension in the middle of chaotic space was definitely an extraordinary person.

Barker’s eyes lit up. “Lord Linley, now I know why there is a massive magicite gem mine here. Look. The elemental essence density here is terrifyingly high. Even someone like me, who has poor elemental essence affinity, can clearly sense all sorts of elements here. And aside from elemental essence, there is a unique energy here as well.”

Linley, too, could sense the thick density of natural elemental essence here.

Earth, fire, water, wind, thunder, light, darkness. The density of all the elements here was unbelievably high. Aside from these seven, Linley could sense other sorts of energy as well. There was a sort of energy that was rather similar to Zassler’s, a terrifying destructive energy, and also an energy filled with life...

“This should be the energy belonging to the Four Overgods.” Linley knew that aside from the seven elemental types of energy, there were also four types of unique, profound energy.

Linley looked at Barker. “That door should be a connection between the Yulan continent and this dimension. Most likely, this secret room attracted a great deal of elemental energy, which created a huge magicite mine surrounding the door.”

“However...”

“The mysterious expert who trained here should have left a long, long time ago.” Linley was very certain of this.

“Oh?” Barker looked at Linley questioningly.

“Without this mysterious expert training here, there is no way such a large amount of elemental essence would have been drawn here. We’ve been in the Anarchic Lands for a while now. If we didn’t come mining here, who would have discovered all of these magicite gems?”

Linley laughed. “Logically speaking, to form such a massive magicite deposit, there should have been a huge amount of elemental essence here, a terrifying amount. Most likely, the experts of the entire Yulan continent would have sensed it.”

“But no one in our history has ever mentioned such a thing. Thus, the large amount of elemental energy being drawn here should have been something that happened an extremely long time ago.”

As he spoke, Linley suddenly shut his eyes and sat down.

“Lord Linley?” Barker called out softly.

But Linley seemed to have not noticed him at all, as he sat there in the meditative position quietly.

The pulse of the world, and its massiveness...

The ferociousness of the wind, and its gentle agility...

The scorching heat of the fire, and its explosiveness...

The softness of the water, like an endless field of cotton...

Within this pocket dimension, Linley could sense nature with greater clarity than he ever had before. Right now, he could also sense with a hundred times his previous clarity the ‘Throbbing Pulse of the World’, and the unique tempos possessed by the wind. He could also clearly sense the path he should take next.

Even the average elemental affinity he had for ‘fire elemental essence’ was magnified. Linley could clearly sense the fire elemental essence to such a high level that it was as strong as his normal affinity was for earth elemental essence outside of this pocket dimension.

Although the water elemental essence was still quite indistinct, Linley could still sense its unique rhythm and flows.

And he could also sense the unique energy coming from the Four Overgods.

“So this is how the throbbing pulse of the world works.” Linley felt a surge of joy in his heart. He felt as though his previous training was akin to listening to the sound of a clock from thousands of kilometers away. The sound of the clock was indistinct. But now, he was next to a grandfather clock, listening to the sound. He could clearly sense and hear the unique rhythms of that clock now.

The mysteries of the Throbbing Pulse of the World suddenly became clear to him.

“256 layers of vibrations? Haha... so that’s how it works. Here in the Yulan continent, it feels as though there are countless layers to the Throbbing Pulse of the World. But now it seems that although the Throbbing Pulse of the World has layer after layer, that is just the countless mysteries contained with a single layer which carries infinite mysteries, encapsulating all of the mysteries of my 256 layers.”

Linley instantly understood what his path of training should be.

In the past, Linley’s training was similar to reading a book and making the book ‘thicker’. But now, what he had to do was make the book ‘thin’ again. And the book was... the ‘Throbbing Pulse of the World’, one of the profound truths of the Elemental Laws of Earth.

“Upon having reached the 256 layers, I am halfway through my mastery of the ‘Throbbing Pulse of the World’. Now, what I must do is... reduced the Profound Truths of the Earth to a single layered wave.”

Originally, he went from one to 256 - and now... he needed to go back to one.

When Linley was able to contain all of the profound truths of that Law within a single vibration, and was able to utilize the full force of the ‘Throbbing Pulse of the World’ in that vibration, only then would he be at the level of mastery. Most likely by then... with a single, simple blow from his sword, he would be able to shake his opponent into a pile of mud.

“A precious training ground.” Linley opened his eyes, now filled with shocked delight.

“Lord Linley?” Barker saw that Linley had woken up. He finally relaxed. “Lord,

you sat there for three days.”

“Three days?” Linley knew that when immersed in sensing the Laws, the flow of time would become imperceptible. However, it was worth it... he had been stuck at the bottleneck with the 256 layers for over a year.

Without the mysterious training room...

Perhaps he would have been like many other experts and would be stuck at this bottleneck for dozens or hundreds of years, waiting for that moment of sudden insight. Only then would he know how to proceed.

“No wonder that mysterious expert created his own pocket dimension training room. Indeed... training within a pocket dimension in chaotic space allows one to sense the various Laws with a much greater clarity.” Linley had already become aware of the benefits of this place.

Although there weren't any treasures or divine artifacts in this room, to an expert training in the various Laws, this room itself was a priceless treasure.

“Thank you for your gift, elder.” Linley bowed formally towards the training room.

Turning his head to look at the puzzled Barker, he said, “Barker, let's go out for now. Most likely in a few days, the battle at the prefectural city of Cod will occur.” As he spoke, Linley walked out of the pocket dimension.

Barker was somewhat puzzled. Why had Linley bowed towards that expert who was currently who-knows-where?

He didn't understand how grateful Linley felt.

He had been meditating and pondering for over a year, but hadn't improved at all. That sort of stifling feeling was quite uncomfortable. No one knew how long Linley would have been stuck at that bottleneck. But thanks to the secret room, his path of training in the Laws would be a bit easier to walk.

“Nobody is permitted to enter this excavation tunnel. In the future, no one is allowed to mine here as well.” As he walked out of the tunnel, he gave the order to the military officers nearby. This pocket dimension was something that one could only dream of.

It was far more precious than any sort of divine artifact.

Perhaps even the War God or the High Priest would feel envious and desirous if they found out about it.

“Demigods shouldn’t have the ability to create a pocket dimension,” Linley secretly thought to himself. Linley had the feeling that the ability to create a stable pocket dimension within chaotic space, even a small one, was something only a terrifyingly powerful expert could do.

Linley and Barker flew side by side towards the prefectural city of Cod.

The two headed directly to the military headquarters. Within the third floor of that hotel, Watts and his assistants were in a loud argument, but upon seeing Linley and Barker come in, all of them saluted respectfully.

“Watts, what is the current situation?” Linley asked.

Watts hurriedly reported, “Lord Linley, according to our investigation, the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows are constantly sending people over the river. However, their numbers are too great, and they have all sorts of siege weapons. Most likely, they won’t be finished with the river crossing until nightfall.”

Linley nodded slightly.

“I heard arguing just then. What are you arguing about?” Barker asked questioningly.

Watts said, “It’s like this. Over sixty to seventy thousand troops have already crossed the river. Their forces are somewhat in disarray, which is only natural following a river crossing. My assistants are recommending that we seize the opportunity to go out and attack them.”

“However, I vetoed that idea,” Watts said.

The Power of Magicite Cannons

“Oh? You vetoed it?” Linley looked questioningly at Watts.

He felt that the suggestion was a rather reasonable one. When the enemy forces were in disarray, a sudden attack could definitely give the forces of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows a bloody nose.

Watts said respectfully, “Lord Linley, the reason I vetoed this subjection has three parts to it.”

Three parts?

Linley had to admit that he didn’t know much about warfare, and so he carefully listened to Watts’ explanation.

“First of all, the chances of success are not high, because there is a distance of several dozen kilometers from the prefectural city of Cod to the river. If we were to send our troops over, by the time they arrived, the enemy forces would number over a million, and the disposition of the troops would have been reformed again.”

Barker shook his head. “For a million soldiers to set up their formations and be battle-ready is not something done so easily.”

Watts nodded. “That is indeed true. I’m just saying that the enemy forces would be prepared for battle. We only have half a million soldiers. How many can we send out on a sneak attack? And this is just the first consideration. The second is... I believe that the commanders of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows would not have made such an elementary mistake.”

“If I was the commander of the enemy forces...”

Watts smiled. “I would first have my most elite soldiers cross the river, then put on a façade of being in a state of disorder on the other side to lure the enemy to attack. When the enemy truly came to attack, the elite troops would

immediately deliver a headache-causing blow to them.”

“It must be understood that our biggest support is the city walls!” Watts said seriously. “With the city walls, we can kill three of them for every one of us they kill. Thus, they want to seduce us into fighting with them on a level playing field.”

Linley nodded in approval.

Watts continued, “As for the third reason, it is because in warfare, tactics are of less importance than strategy. Our goal is to keep the enemy outside and not let them break into the city. This is the most important thing. As long as we succeed, then this battle will be our victory.”

“Therefore, there is no need for us to pay any attention to the ‘flaws’ of the enemy. Who knows if those flaws are even real or not?”

Watts laughed calmly. “All we need to do is stay inside the prefectural city of Cod and rely on the advantage of the walls to stand guard. Unless something happens beyond our expectations, victory will be ours.”

The night passed. The day slowly brightened.

The Dark Cardinal, Weiss Porter, was riding a darkness-element demonic tiger as he stared in the direction of the prefectural city of Cod.

“Guillermo, I have the feeling that this is going to be a very laborious battle,” Weiss Porter said with a frown. “We already slowed down the speed of our troops crossing the river, and also had our troops be in a state of ‘disorder.’ But the prefectural city of Cod acted as though they didn’t notice. They didn’t send anyone over to attack.”

Guillermo nodded.

They had prepared a ‘welcoming feast’ for the enemies, but unfortunately, the plan had failed.

Right now, the entire army had crossed the river and rested an entire night. They were now steadily advancing in the direction of the prefectural city of Cod. Their total forces numbered 1.6 million soldiers. Such a terrifyingly large army covered the entire area like an endless tide.

“I’m not afraid that Linley’s commanding general is intelligent or sly. What I’m afraid of is that he’ll just hide in the city like a turtle in its shell,” Weiss Porter said.

Guillermo nodded as well.

If the opponent relied on the advantage of the city walls, breaking through the prefectural city of Cod would most likely cause heavy losses to their side. Although they had 1.6 million soldiers, they weren’t willing to waste too many lives.

“Weiss Porter,” Guillermo said. “Then what should we do?”

The commanding generals of this battle were naturally Guillermo and Weiss Porter. In terms of stratagems, Guillermo was inferior to Weiss Porter. Weiss laughed calmly. “There’s nothing for it. Right now, let’s go test the enemy’s strength.”

Only when one knew the opponent and knew one’s self was one capable of being ever victorious.

The entire prefectural city of Cod had been transformed into an enormous military fort. The civilians had been moved out long ago, and most of the houses had been renovated and demolished. Tunnels and pits had been dug. Large numbers of soldiers were clustered on the walls of the east city and the south city. On the west and north sides, however, there were fewer soldiers.

All sorts of weapons had been dragged onto the city walls.

Linley and Barker were dressed in armor, pretending to be military officers doing an inspection on the southern walls. The city walls were a hotbed of activity, and the multi-kilometer-long walls were packed with people. There were over a hundred thousand people on the walls of the south side of the city alone.

“So many people.” Linley and Barker stared from afar.

They looked like densely clustered locusts. The 1.6-million-man-army of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows covered the land, streaming towards the prefectural city of Cod. 1.6 million people! A number that was easy to say, but when so many soldiers came charging over...

It was terrifying!

Even Linley felt a tremendous sense of pressure.

“Who knows how many people will die as a result of this battle.” Barker sighed.

Staring at the dense mass of soldiers, Linley also felt that this battle would definitely be a vicious, cruel one. But ever since human society began, wars had existed as well.

Although Linley and his men could see the forces of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows, in reality, those soldiers were still quite a distance off.

Only, because the enemy forces were simply too massive in number, the soldiers on the wall could see them from far, far away.

“Let’s go to Watts. He is our commanding general. We can’t let anything happen to him.” Linley led Barker to the city walls of the south city. Watts was currently in an unremarkable little building in the south city.

Seeing Linley and Barker, Watts immediately bowed.

“Watts, Lord Linley and I have come to protect you.” Barker laughed.

No matter how steady Watts was normally, he grew excited now. Linley laughed. “Enough. Focus on preparing to deal with the enemy. What is your strategy for dealing with a million-man-army?” Linley personally felt lost.

Watts laughed. “No rush. Whatever methods they use, I’ll use the appropriate countermeasures.”

“What do you think they will do for their attack?” Barker asked.

“After they crossed the river, they weren’t in a rush to attack. Instead, they let their soldiers rest and waited for dawn. I expect... in about an hour, they will reach the city. At noon, they will begin their first wave of attacks.” Watts laughed calmly.

“The first wave shouldn’t be too strong. They will only be testing our strength. How do you plan to respond?” Barker asked.

“Magicite cannons,” Watts replied.

“You’ll use magicite cannons immediately?” Barker frowned. The magicite cannons were their secret weapons. It should be better to use them at a critical moment. Watts said with certainty, “Lord Grand Marshall, don’t worry. Just watch and enjoy. When the time comes, you will understand.”

“You put on mysterious airs in front of me?” Barker shook his head and laughed.

Linley just sat there to one side quietly. All he had to do was hand the affairs of running this battle to these men. A long time later... Linley suddenly opened his eyes and said to Watts, “Begin to prepare. The Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows have sent their vanguard to prepare their attack.”

Watts looked at Linley in surprise.

Linley didn’t explain too much. Although he hadn’t used his spiritual energy, given Linley’s insights into the Elemental Laws of the Wind, even from kilometers away, Linley could clearly sense everything going on if he so chose.

“Milord, two legions of the enemy have begun to attack towards our gates.” A military officer suddenly ran inside.

Although the city walls were tens of kilometers long, the attacks would generally be centered around the city gates.

Watts glanced at Linley, then immediately began to issue orders. “Carry out our original plans. Prepare ten magicite cannons. Give our guests a ‘welcoming present’.” Watts chuckled, and the military officer’s eyes had a hint of excitement in them as well. “Yes, milord.”

“Come, let’s go watch.” Linley stood up.

On the city wall, Linley and Barker were staring down. They saw two legions with a large number of people charge forward. Compared to an army of 1.6 million, 40,000 soldiers weren’t much, but when they charged over, they still felt like a human wave of attackers.

“Kill!”

The tens of thousands of soldiers below raised their shields, charging the city gates with their weapons in hand. Their angry roars sounded like the thunder. A

number of soldiers were charging forward while carrying massive escalades, while in their hearts, they were nervous about being shot by the arrows of the soldiers on the wall.

But what shocked them was, no arrows were fired.

“Fire!” An angry roar.

The runes on those ten magicite cannons instantly lit up, and a terrifying amount of elemental essence began to surround them. Suddenly, those magicite cannons emitted a terrifying, ferocious roar as ten explosions of light suddenly struck against the enemy legions.

“Magicite cannons!” Terrified sounds could be heard.

One of the balls of fire landed right in the middle of a legion, and the people nearby the ball of fire were instantly turned to charcoal. When the ball of fire hit the ground, it instantly turned into a blazing ring of fire that began to expand like a ripple of water in every direction. All soldiers touched by the ring of fire began to scream in agony as they were burned alive.

Fire magic – Blazing Rings of Fire!

With that one blast, a hundred people died.

One of the other balls of light, a bluish-white one, fell down into the legion as well, and the soldiers in the area around it were instantly frozen solid, then shattered into tiny pieces. This bluish-white ball of light shattered explosively, transforming into millions of terrifying projectile attacks that shot in every direction. “Swish!” Many soldiers were struck by these flying shards, and countless people began to scream in misery as a result of the blast.

Water magic – Angry Sea of Arrow Rain!

Different types of magicite cannons would use different types of magicite gems and produce different types of attacks. But without question, this single barrage from the ten magicite cannons caused over a thousand deaths and even more injuries.

But then, the magicite cannons lit up again.

“Bang!” “Bang!” “Bang!”

Almost at the same time, the magicite cannons struck again. The enemies were either burned to death, shot to death by freezing shards, devoured by locusts, or electrocuted to death by lightning... the ten magicite cannons fired at the two legions, and to those two legions, they represented the apocalypse.

Weiss Porter and Guillermo were together.

“Milords,” a military officer saluted as he made the report, “The two legions who launched the first wave of attacks against the south gate have retreated, and the legion at the east gate has retreated as well. We discovered that at the south gate, ten magicite cannons have been emplaced, while five have been emplaced at the east gate. These magicite cannons are all large-caliber cannons at the level of magi of the eighth rank.”

Guillermo let out a cold snort. “This is what I was afraid of, that they would have magicite cannons. So they really do have them, and large-caliber ones. Who sold it to them?”

Weiss Porter laughed calmly. “That’s not the issue right now. Their possession of magicite cannons is within our predictions. However, since they only have five at the east gate, then... tomorrow, let’s do a real full-on attack.”

“A full-on attack?” Guillermo looked at Weiss Porter.

Weiss Porter nodded. “Right. We’ll pretend to be focusing on the south gate while sending a small part of our forces to attack the east gate, but the small portion attacking the east gate will be composed of our elite squads,” Weiss Porter said firmly.

“Weiss Porter, what do you intend?” Guillermo looked at him. “To focus our attacks on the east gate?”

The ratio of forces didn’t determine how powerful each force would be. If the soldiers were elite, a hundred thousand of them might be able to defeat a force of four hundred thousand ordinary soldiers.

“True is false, false is true. We’re just tricking our enemies. If a hundred thousand elite soldiers suddenly attack at once, if the east gate isn’t fully prepared, we might be able to break through at one stroke,” Weiss Porter said confidently.

Guillermo laughed. “If I was the enemy commander, when I saw your million soldiers outside the south gate while only a hundred thousand were at the east gate, I would probably focus my attention on the south gate as well.”

Explosive Fury

The forces of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows were outside the south gate of the prefectural city of Cod, a seemingly endless sea of forces. The soldiers of the prefectural city of Cod were all on high alert. They knew that this 'endless sea of soldiers' in front of them could suddenly transform into tidal waves that would wash over them.

A small part of the army below had separated from the main forces.

This small part took a side route, heading towards the east gate of the prefectural city of Cod. Factoring in the local geography, the Radiant Church was only able to attack the south gate and the east gate. As for the north gate and the west gate, there was no way for the armies to make it there. The army that came to the east gate was comprised of two legions.

These two legions were of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows. The elite legions of both sides.

The commander of the legion belonging to the Cult of Shadows was a man with short blue hair and a severe face who was staring at the city walls. Next to him was a gold-haired man, the commander of the elite legion of the Radiant Church.

If they were able to take down the east gate, they would both have rendered huge military merits in this battle.

"Just five magicite cannons," The blue-haired man said calmly. "Rogers, how about this. Our soldiers will first charge forward, and when we get close to the walls, the vanguard will suddenly form tight ranks and use the escalades to create an opening in the city walls. The other soldiers will follow from behind. As long as we can get onto the city walls, the prefectural city of Cod will be finished."

Rogers glanced at him. "Brian, then let's see who will be the first to break

through.”

“Fine.” Brian’s eyes were filled with arrogance.

Time passed. The two elite legions were in a state of quiet readiness, waiting... and then suddenly, they heard the terrifying sound of slaughter. Magicite cannons began to boom, warriors shouted with rage, arrows howled through the air, and an ocean-like series of roars split the world apart.

“They’ve started on the other side.” A hint of a smile was on Brian’s lips.

Rogers nodded slightly as well. “When we break through the east gate, our victory will be assured.”

Per their original plans, they would wait for the battle at the south gate to reach a crescendo of madness... after five minutes, Brian suddenly let out a furious roar, “Kill!” Their generals, who knew the plan all along, immediately led their soldiers to charge out and attack.

Those forty-meter-long escalades began to move at frighteningly fast speed towards the east gate.

A large number of soldiers advanced at high speed, shields held above their heads.

The five magicite cannons at the east walls began to light up. “Boom!” “Boom!” The magicite cannons howled ferociously, and five balls of light began to shoot out at high speed, exploding into balls of terrifying light once they hit the floor. Instantly, soldiers began to die in those areas, but the remaining soldiers didn’t hesitate at all.

Hesitating meant death.

“So fast!” The commander at the east gate had already discovered how fast the enemies were running towards them. The magicite cannons had only rang out three times, but the enemies were already within a hundred meters. “Wait a second!” He suddenly discovered that the fastest running soldiers of the enemies suddenly formed a unit with perfect coordination.

Clearly, these were elite warriors. They had most likely come to join forces and force a breach.

“Hrmph. It looks like they really did...” The commander’s face revealed a cold smile.

“All magicite cannons, prepare!” the commander howled loudly, and instantly... fifteen more magicite cannon emplacements appeared on the city walls. Combined with the previous five, there was an awe-inspiring grand total of twenty magicite cannons. The twenty magicite cannons all lit up at the same time.

Seeing another fifteen magicite cannons appear, the faces of Brian and Rogers, the two legion commanders, instantly changed.

“No!” Brian’s face was savage, and he roared in uncomprehending fury.

“Boom!” “Boom!” “Boom!” “Boom!”

Twenty magicite cannons simultaneously unleashed their terrifying fury, and their targets were clearly those special, elite soldiers who were leading at the front of the attacking line. An earth-shaking series of explosions could be heard.

“No!” Many warriors, seeing the light of the magicite cannon blasts fly towards them at high speed, screamed in fury and terror.

But the cannon blasts were simply too fast. With a flash of light, the blasts hit the ground, giving the warriors no chance to dodge at all. The warriors in the area were blasted to smithereens, with some being frozen solid, others burned alive to charcoal, and still others clutching their severed limbs and screaming miserably...

In the blink of an eye, over three thousand people had died, and several thousand were badly injured as well.

It was too terrifying.

Many warriors were stunned and awe-stricken. In addition, many of the dead were the elite of the elite. The remaining soldiers began to feel dread in their hearts.

“Charge! Kill the bastards and avenge our comrades!” Some warriors howled with fury as they continued the charge.

“If we make our way up there, we win!”

But before their escalades even had a chance to be boarded, on the walls of the east wall, a large number of warriors began throwing casks of oil downwards, pouring those boiling casks of oil directly onto the bodies of the attacking warriors.

“Ah!!!” Many warriors clutched their faces as their bodies spasmed, and they fell off the escalades.

“Fire!”

A cold sound rang out, and not only did those twenty magicite cannons once more unleash the god of death... other warriors also began to shoot fire arrows at the enemies as well. Many people below had been covered with hot oil, and now, with fire arrows shooting down...

Some of those people who had ‘only’ been scalded by oil but not killed were suddenly turned into human torches.

The ground below the walls had turned into a sea of flame.

Many warriors had become human fireballs, all of them emitting tortured screams before collapsing. The soldiers behind them no longer dared to advance, because in front of them was a sea of flame. However, at this moment, those twenty magicite cannons once more attacked, killing thousands more.

Explosions rocked the enemy camp.

Rogers and Brian were about to go insane. They howled with fierce rage, “Retreat, retreat, quickly, retreat!” In the blink of an eye, over ten thousand of their warriors had died, and several thousand more were injured.

The worst thing was, those twenty magicite cannons were continuing to attack.

The twenty magicite cannons had stripped the attackers of all their courage and morale.

Five magicite cannons might only be able to kill a thousand soldiers in one blast, but as long as they made it through three blasts, they will be able to close in. But twenty magicite cannons were different... the combined attacks of these

cannons were fully capable of killing all the elite vanguard soldiers of the attackers.

The power of twenty magicite cannons was simply too great.

Even though they were retreating like mad, the twenty magicite cannons were still able to attack two more times, and thousands more collapsed. Those beautiful, firework-like balls of light were actually heart-shaking, powerful attacks.

It must be said that the magic attacks were indeed very powerful. For example, the 'Blazing Rings of Fire' were like a fiery red ripple.

Unfortunately, although they were as beautiful as a dream, they were as terrifying as a butcher's blade.

"A hundred thousand soldiers... twenty thousand dead. Another ten thousand wounded." Rogers' voice was very low. "In a short period of time, our morale has been completely destroyed. The warriors don't have the courage to charge those twenty magicite cannons again."

By relying on their shields, they could block enemy arrows.

But those shields weren't able to block magicite cannon blasts, especially large-caliber ones.

"Twenty. Why are there twenty magicite cannons?" Brian said furiously. "When the Lord Cardinal sent us here, didn't they say there were only five magicite cannons? If we knew there were twenty, we wouldn't have sent them to their deaths like that!"

Magicite cannons were simply too terrifying.

As long as the enemy were in firing range, their lives would be lost. In addition, the reloading time between each blast was very short. As long as they were charged with sufficient magicite gems, they would be able to constantly attack. They were far more terrifying than even twenty magi of the eighth rank.

"Go back." Rogers looked at his surrounding soldiers and immediately issued the order.

Brian clenched his fists, unwilling to admit what just happened.

“Motherfucker. We were tricked. The people of the prefectural city of Cod really are motherfucking bastards. Let’s go back.” They had lost 30% of their attack power. If they were to attack again, they probably wouldn’t be able to muster even half of their earlier attack power.”

But the enemy hadn’t lost a single warrior.

Of course, the enemy had spent a huge amount of money. Each time the magicite cannons fired, an enormous amount of gold coins was being spent. How many kingdoms would be willing to afford the cost of twenty magicite cannons constantly blasting nonstop like this?

What was real was false. What was false was real.

The Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows had played some tricks, but unfortunately, the prefectural city of Cod had been hiding the true number of magicite cannons. They had a total of thirty-six magicite cannons, but had only taken out fifteen at first.

According to their plans, the east gate would have twenty magicite cannons, while the south gate would have sixteen.

The battle at the east gate concluded quickly, but the battle at the south gate was extremely brutal.

“Prepare.” A large number of soldiers on the walls of the south side fell to the ground, greatbows at the ready, their arms tensed. Those enormous bows were terrifying to behold. Any of the soldiers here could easily lift several hundred pounds.

And now, for them to need to use both hands and both feet to draw and fire these bows, one could imagine how powerful they were.

“Fire!”

When the order came, countless massive arrows fell down like rain from the city walls, creating a terrifying howl as they descended downwards. Ordinary shields were of no use. These massive arrows punched straight through them, piercing through the shield-bearing soldiers.

Instantly, a large number of people fell down.

But although a large number had died, others immediately charged forward to take their place.

A large number of escalades had already latched onto the city walls, and many soldiers were even preparing to charge onto them. The six previously hidden magicite cannons were pulled out as well, and sixteen magicite cannons roared wildly, spitting brilliant balls of fire onto the ground below, killing men in large swathes.

However, the forces of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows were simply too numerous.

They were like an endless wave!

“Let’s retreat for now. If we continue to fight like this, all we are doing is fighting a battle of attrition. Too many will die.” Guillermo was frowning. In such a short period of time, they had already lost over a hundred thousand people. But of course, the prefectural city of Cod had lost people as well, at least over ten thousand.”

The main problem was that those sixteen magicite cannons killed too many people. And also, there were those giant arrows and the falling boulders.

Those atop the walls always had a great advantage.

“I have a bad feeling.” Weiss Porter was frowning as he watched those sixteen magicite cannons roar. “There should only have been ten magicite cannons, but when the battle began, six more appeared. I’m worried... about the east gate.”

Guillermo’s heart trembled.

“Are you saying that more magicite cannons appeared on that side as well?” Guillermo shook his head. “Not necessarily. Perhaps they simply moved the magicite cannons of the east gate to the south gate.”

“I hope that’s the case.” Weiss Porter didn’t care about the dead soldiers.

What he wanted was victory.

“Lord Cardinal.” A disheveled Brian and Rogers came running at high speed towards Guillermo and Weiss Porter.

“What is it?” As soon as the Cardinals saw these two, they knew things had

not gone well.

Brian cursed with fury, "Lord Cardinal, who provided the intelligence estimates? They are nothing more than motherfucking bastards. It wasn't five magicite cannons, it was twenty! Twenty damn magicite cannons! My comrades... with just a few blasts, twenty thousand of them died, and many were injured as well. Our legions only had a total of a hundred thousand men. We've instantly lost 30% of our fighting capability. What's more... the elites of our legion, those who had the courage to charge at the front, died even faster. Our soldiers don't have any fighting spirit left at all. They are all terrified."

Weiss Porter's face changed.

He completely understood now.

Staring at the distant prefectural city of Cod, Weiss Porter ground his teeth. "So you played us. You enticed us to attack the east city, then changed five magicite cannons into twenty?" Weiss Porter's eyes were red from rage. "Guillermo, forget the plans and schemes. Have all the experts of the ninth rank charge, now!"

Battle to the Death

Guillermo was silent for a moment, then said, “Fine. Let them go.”

Soon, six seemingly ordinary warriors appeared in the headquarters. Weiss Porter and Guillermo glanced at each other, and then Weiss Porter said to those six men, “The six of you, mingle into the center of the army and charge with them towards the city walls. When you reach the city walls, increase your speed and break open the city gates, then lead the army into the city. You must catch them off-guard and make them unable to react in time.”

“Yes, milord.”

Three of the men immediately acknowledged, while the other three looked at Guillermo. Guillermo nodded slightly. “Act as Weiss Porter said.”

“Yes, milord.”

On the massive, wide ground, locust-like hordes of men were charging wildly against the city. Sixteen magicite cannons were constantly flashing with brilliant light, taking lives away with each flash. On the walls above the prefectural city of Cod, Linley, Barker, Gates, Hazer, Ankh, and Boone, and the others were watching the battle.

“They are fighting wildly enough,” Gates licked his lips, grinning as he spoke.

Hazer looked at Linley, his eyes shining. “Lord Linley, let us go and teach them a lesson.” Of the five Barker brothers, only Barker had reached the Saint level in his human form. The other four were at the peak of the ninth rank, about to break through at any moment.

Linley looked at the battle going down below. Laughing calmly, he said, “No rush. You will have your chance soon. But remember, no matter what, you cannot allow them to seize the magicite mine.”

Compared to the large amount of magicite gems, Linley actually valued the

pocket dimension more.

That was a precious training place that had to be preserved.

“Unfortunately, Zassler has reached the Saint level as well. Otherwise, once he acted, he would probably be able to counter a million soldiers at once, all by himself,” Linley sighed as he spoke. Zassler and Linley had reached the Saint level almost at the same time. Zassler was now a Saint-level Grand Magus Necromancer. After becoming a Grand Magus Necromancer, Zassler’s power had reached a terrifying new height.

What Zassler currently spent his time doing was collecting Saint-level undead.

A single Grand Magus Necromancer could collect and tame a group of Saint-level undead. One could imagine how terrifyingly powerful they were.

“That old bastard. He spends all his time hiding inside the mountain and training. He never shows himself these days,” Gates grumbled. “Last time, I went to look for him, and he actually sent a Saint-level undead to battle me for a while. I have to admit... that zombie was really pretty damn powerful.” Gates sighed.

Linley secretly snickered.

Zassler was only joking around with Gates. Linley himself knew... if Zassler was really acting in earnest, Gates would probably have been defeated in an instant. This was because necromancers were highly skilled in matters pertaining the soul, and were extremely talented at ‘spiritual attacks’. Upon reaching the Saint level, once Zassler used a spiritual attack...

Even a powerful Saint probably wouldn’t be able to take it.

“Bang!”

Suddenly, Linley and the others felt the city walls suddenly shake violently. Barker’s face changed. “Not good!” Linley’s spiritual energy had also discovered that below, six warriors of the ninth rank had joined forces to smash through the city gates.

“Charge!” The attacking soldiers found, to their delight, that the city gates were down.

Immediately, a large number of soldiers began to pour towards the city gates. The leaders of the soldiers were those six warriors of the ninth rank. The garrison guards of the prefectural city of Cod wanted to block them, but they were easily slaughtered by those six warriors of the ninth rank. The commander of the south gate, however, simply watched coldly as this all happened.

“Boulder, drop!” The commander’s voice rang out without a hint of panic.

Instantly, dozens of warriors pulled at hidden levers. With clanking sounds, a massive boulder that was over dozens of meters thick began to fall down. The soldiers below wanted to dodge, but most weren’t able to do so and were smashed into meat patties.

“Bam!”

The city gates had been sealed!

The soldiers outside weren’t able to make it in, and the soldiers inside weren’t able to go out either.

“Six warriors of the ninth rank. They really are going all out,” Gates roared angrily, and then with a flip of his hand, he retrieved his massive greataxe as he charged down from the top of the walls into the inner courtyard. All six of those warriors of the ninth rank had been inside the city already. Gates jumped down, and he was immediately followed by Ankh, Boone, and Hazer as well.

Within the city.

The six warriors of the ninth rank were engaged in a wild slaughter, with none of the soldiers around them able to fend them off.

“Quick, flee!” one of the warriors of the ninth rank shouted loudly as he sent his warblade chopping down towards an officer, who was instantly split into two halves. Wherever these warriors of the ninth rank went, corpses followed in their wake.

The other warriors of the ninth rank knew that they couldn’t stay here for too long either.

They didn’t pay any mind to the soldiers who had followed them in either. A golden-haired, one-eyed warrior suddenly launched himself off the ground,

easily sending himself over thirty meters into the air, flipping past the wall and arriving outside the city. The other five warriors of the ninth rank immediately also launched off the ground...

“You want to run?!”

A furious howl, and then a terrifying greataxe flashed towards them. Gates was the first one to land, and in mid-air, he stopped one of the leaping warriors of the ninth rank. The warrior of the ninth rank actually wanted to use the heavy sword in his hands to block the axe, but as soon as he did...

“Bam!”

The warrior’s heavy sword shattered into pieces, and he was smashed back down into the ground, the ground shaking from the collision. Gates howled angrily, “You motherfuckers actually dare to break into the city? Die!” The terrifying greataxe chopped down yet again, and it was as though the surrounding area had suddenly frozen.

Gates had already reached the ‘impose’ level of understanding!

There was no place for the warrior of the ninth rank to flee. “Ah!” A miserable, agonized cry could be heard, and then he was eviscerated by the massive greataxe. Blood and splintered organs splashed everywhere, and his body fell heavily to the ground, never to rise again.

Although they were both warriors of the ninth rank, Gates was at the peak of the ninth rank and an Undying Warrior. The difference was too great.

The other four warriors also encountered Boone, Ankh, and Hazer. Ankh, all by himself, forced two of them back down. The eyes of Hazer, Boone, and Ankh were filled with savage, murderous delight.

The battle concluded very quickly.

“Milord, aside from myself, the other five... were unable to escape.” The golden-haired, one-eyed man clearly seemed unwilling to accept this outcome.

Weiss Porter and Guillermo’s faces turned ugly to behold.

“How is that possible? You are warriors of the ninth rank!” Weiss Porter’s face couldn’t help but turn pale as he spoke.

“I saw Linley and those Undying Warriors on the city walls,” Guillermo suddenly said. At Guillermo’s level of power, despite being kilometers away, he was still able to see Linley and the others on the city walls.

Weiss Porter’s voice turned low. “Guillermo, could it be that Linley is ignoring our previous agreement and is acting against warriors of the ninth rank?”

“It shouldn’t be Linley.” Guillermo shook his head. “If it was him, most likely not even a single warrior would have escaped. I expect that it was those Undying Warriors who haven’t reached the Saint level yet in their human forms. Given their power, it shouldn’t be hard for them to deal with an ordinary warrior of the ninth rank.”

Weiss Porter was beginning to frown.

“You can go now.” The lucky survivor left.

Weiss Porter sent out the order. “Let the attacking soldiers retreat for now. Today, we’ll pause for now.”

“Yes, milord.” The messenger immediately ran out.

Guillermo looked at Weiss Porter, puzzled. Weiss Porter closed his eyes. After a while, he opened them, then said calmly, “Guillermo, at nightfall, let’s prepare to order our men to attack again, late at night. We have to take down the city before daybreak tomorrow. We’ll pay whatever cost in lives is necessary.”

“Late night?” Guillermo frowned as he looked at Weiss Porter. “Even if we don’t care about the lives of our warriors, it’ll be hard to break through.”

Neither Guillermo nor Weiss Porter cared at all about the lives of their ordinary soldiers. They commanded a tremendously high number of soldiers, and it was in fact useful to reduce the population a bit through warfare. Ordinary warriors only required a year or two of training, after all.

They didn’t care about them.

What they cared about were elite soldiers.

For example, the hundred thousand soldiers that had been sent to attack the east gates.

“Tonight, we will attack the city, no matter the cost. If by five in the morning,

we still haven't broken through, then we will use your final trump card." Weiss Porter looked at Guillermo. "What say you, Guillermo?"

"Our final trump card?" Guillermo was silent for a moment.

He knew what Weiss Porter was talking about. Guillermo nodded slightly. "Fine!"

Actually, if they were to begin attacking at midnight and fight like wild all the way until five in the morning, even if they weren't able to break through, they would exhaust the forces of the prefectural city of Cod. At that point, the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows would use their trump cards, making their victory utterly assured.

The countless warriors beneath the walls retreated like the retreating tides.

Watts stood atop the walls, his face expressionless.

Linley looked at Watts from nearby, his eyes filled with praise. Just then, he had watched the entire procession of battle. The enemy had attacked multiple times, at the east gate and the west gate, but Watts' orders as well as his distribution of forces had been quite perfect.

"Watts." Linley, Barker, Boone, Ankh, and the others walked towards him.

Watts bowed as soon as he saw the group of people.

Linley smiled. "Today's battle has already concluded. Watts, get a good night's rest."

"No need, milord." Watts had a very serious look on his face. "Today, the enemy attacked us several times with their armies. They used their elite soldiers to try and break through the east gate, then sent warriors of the ninth rank to break through the south gate. And they had their soldiers attack wildly... I can sense that the opposing commander isn't a very patient person. I expect that his next strategy will be exposed later today or tomorrow. Tonight, they will probably attempt a sneak attack."

Watts looked towards the enemy camp.

When two armies engaged in battle, if one could understand the personality of the opposing commander, one would be able to better predict the enemy's

actions.

“Oh?” A hint of a smile was on Linley’s face.

Gates laughed loudly. “Lord Linley, don’t have any doubts. Watts’ predictions are at least 90% likely to occur.”

That night, Linley, Barker, and the others were drinking wine in a courtyard. Because Watts had predicted that the enemy would attempt a sneak attack tonight, all of them were waiting.

“A secret pocket dimension room?” Boone seemed shocked by Linley’s words.

Barker nodded as well. “Right. Even I, someone who doesn’t have much of an affinity for the elements, would clearly sense all the elements in that mysterious room. That sort of feeling... was very unique. I felt closer to nature than ever before.”

“Ankh, Boone, Gates, Hazer. You need to train hard. In the future, when you are at the Saint level, you will be able to train inside the pocket dimension room.” Linley smiled.

The room was ten meters wide. It could indeed permit multiple people to train inside at once.

Suddenly, fierce battle cries erupted from the south gate, immediately followed by the furious roars of magicite cannons. Miserable screams, arrows ripping through the air... Linley, Barker, and the others exchanged glances, then began to laugh.

“That Watts. He guessed correctly. Come.” Linley began to feel some admiration for Watts.

Their group hurried towards the south city gates. The closer they drew, the louder and more terrifying the sounds of battle became. Illuminated by torches, the ground below the city was filled with corpses, while large numbers of soldiers were falling off the walls as well, as the soldiers below wildly shot arrows upwards.

“Siege escalades.” Linley suddenly saw a huge construct slowly make its way towards the city.

Each siege escalade was over forty meters wide, and was made entirely out of steel and cement. The massive mobile forts were slowly making their way towards the city walls. The part of the mobile forts facing the city walls were made entirely out of a thick layer of steel.

“Boom!” The magicite cannons belched forth their fury.

The blazing balls of fire only caused a layer of metal to melt, but the steel was several meters thick. The massive things weren't budged at all. There were ten of these siege escalades, and they formed a line, slowly advancing towards the city walls.

Meat Grinder

The ten siege escalades were like ten giant steel behemoths, slowly advancing despite the withering rain of fire from the magicite cannons.

“Once the siege escalades reach the walls, then... a large number of enemy soldiers will be able to attack through the escalades to the walls.” Barker’s face was hazily illuminated by the light of the firing magicite cannons. Boone, Ankh, Hazer, and Gates all turned solemn as well.

Linley stood atop the walls, staring down at the locust-like horde of soldiers, and those ten massive siege escalades. Even he felt it was rather problematic.

“The next part of the battle will definitely be a ferocious one.”

Even someone like Linley, who barely knew anything about military strategy, could predict how wild the battle was about to get.

“Charge!” the soldiers screamed furiously, their faces ferocious.

Tens of thousands of escalade ladders were placed against the city walls, and a large number of soldiers began to climb onto them, attempting to charge the enemy forces on the walls and engage them in close combat. However... escalade ladders could be knocked off, and could also be lit on fire by burning oil.

In addition, each escalade ladder could only fit two people at once. Faced with a large number of garrison troops who attacked them at once, they weren’t able to do anything.

A soldier on top of an escalade ladder jumped off, wanting to charge into the garrison.

“Slash!”

Multiple swords and sabers swung out, and that poor soldier in front was only able to make one strike before being chopped into a beehive of holes.

“Bang!” An escalade ladder was knocked off, and a large number of soldiers fell down. For a fall of twenty or thirty meters... it wasn't a big deal for the strong, but for the weak, they would die or be crippled from the fall. The worst part of it was... many of the weapons of the already-killed soldiers were lying on the ground.

And so when the new soldiers fell off, they fell onto the weapons.

“Snick!” Their bodies were pierced through by the weapons.

A large number of soldiers also wildly shot arrows at the garrison, the hail of arrows falling onto the walls and even into the city. Many city guards fell down, shot to death by the arrows.

Every moment, warriors were dying. Although many garrison troops were being killed, even more attackers were dying.

“Quick, quick!” From behind the troops, the Dark Cardinal, Weiss Porter, was shouting, “Quick, have the siege escalades pushed more quickly to the city walls!” Weiss Porter simply couldn't keep his calm any longer.

He hoped for a sudden change in fortunes.

The enormous siege escalades were exactly that; powerful tools which could change the fortunes of war.

They were terrifyingly large, and were made almost completely of steel and metal.

These siege escalades were just like giant mobile fortresses. The soldiers in the walls above, when dealing with the soldiers from the siege escalades, wouldn't be at any advantage. After all, the siege escalades would allow hundreds of attacking soldiers to attack at once as well.

“Concentrate your fire against those siege escalades!”

The commander of the south gate issued his order, and instantly, multiple magicite cannons attacked the siege escalades simultaneously. However, the steel canopies protecting the siege escalades were several meters thick. Even powerful magicite cannons weren't able to burn through such a thick layer of steel and break the siege escalades.

At most, the attacks caused the siege escalades to tremble, or perhaps kill a few of the soldiers atop the siege escalades.

But when the soldiers died, more soldiers replaced them from below. After all, one of the primary purposes of the siege escalade was to act as a delivery mechanism for soldiers.

“Come, have the first battalion assemble here and prepare to defend against the first siege escalade,” a commanding officer shouted loudly. To defend against the siege escalades, they had to use their elite soldiers.

The prefectural city of Cod wanted to try their best to block the assault of these siege escalades.

However, these siege ‘behemoths’ were simply unstoppable...

With a sudden ‘bam’ sound, a siege escalade rammed into the city walls. And then multiple ‘bang’ ‘bang’ ‘bang’ sounds could be heard in succession, as one siege escalade after another collided with the city walls.

“Pull, pull, pull!”

Atop one of the siege escalades, a military officer was shouting in anger. Many soldiers around him instantly began to activate the hidden mechanisms of the siege escalade, and with clanking sounds, the thick steel canopy protecting the siege escalade swung down.

“Bang!” The hundred-meter-wide steel canopy smashed hard against the city walls.

This immediately became the equivalent of a hundred-meter-wide corridor from the siege escalade into the prefectural city of Cod. The siege escalade was taller than the city walls to begin with. With the canopy down, the soldiers of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows were able to charge down from the higher ground in a wild attack.

“Brothers, kill them!”

“Avenge the captain! Kill!!!”

Countless ferocious howls came from the soldiers, as they wildly charged down the corridors to the walls of the prefectural city of Cod. They had been

beaten senseless, and while they were charging, many had been shot to death by arrows or blasted apart by magicite cannons. They hadn't even had the chance to fight a fair battle with their enemies.

This sort of frustration and resentment had been building in their hearts.

And now, they finally had the chance to explode.

The ten siege escalades represented ten corridors. Large numbers of soldiers swarmed towards the walls, attacking the defenders. The garrison troops of the prefectural city of Cod didn't budge either. They used boulders to attack, or burning oil... the hundred-meter-wide corridors were utterly filled with people.

One soldier decapitated his opponent, but then someone else rammed a spear through his chest.

The battle at the walls and the siege escalades was a meat grinder!

The attackers and defenders fought in pitched, close-quarter battles!

Large numbers of corpses clotted the area, forming piles so high that they were even higher than the walls themselves as bodies fell downwards. Blood splashed everywhere, causing rivers of blood to form atop the walls and the corridors. Countless soldiers continued to raise their weapons, charging towards their foes.

For the sake of survival.

For the sake of avenging their comrades.

Everyone fought wildly, their eyes red with bloodlust.

"Bang!" "Bang!" ...

The magicite cannons were aiming their fire against the siege escalades now, because the people atop the siege escalades were very tightly clustered. The density was ten times greater than the ground below! Countless soldiers wanted to use the siege escalades to charge onto the enemy's walls.

Indeed, the soldiers moved quickly. Soon, they managed to charge from the siege escalades into the city walls. It was only a distance of a hundred meters from the siege escalade to the city walls! Given the power of these soldiers, it wouldn't even take them ten seconds to close that sort of distance. They all

possessed the hope that during those ten seconds while they were exposed and in the open, the magicite cannons definitely wouldn't be able to strike them.

However!

The magicite cannons continued to fire against the siege escalades, each blast claiming the lives of hundreds of soldiers. Unfortunately, the speed at which the magicite cannons killed people was far slower than the speed at which the soldiers of two sides killed each other in close quarters combat. The soldiers of the prefectural city of Cod began to die in large numbers as well now.

"In close combat, the death ratio is going to be close to one-to-one." Barker looked at Linley. "Lord Linley, if this continues, we won't be able to hold on."

Indeed. The enemy had a total of 1.6 million soldiers. Although they had lost some earlier, 1.6 million was an enormous figure, and those losses meant little. The prefectural city of Cod only had 500,000 soldiers. If they were to fight a war of attrition at a one-to-one rate... a loss of three or four hundred thousand to the enemy would result in them still having nearly a million soldiers, but to Cod, they would only have less than a hundred thousand remaining.

This couldn't be permitted to continue!

Of course, this was just the death ratio for the soldiers in close quarters combat. If they factored in the damage caused by the magicite cannons, as well as those who were being shot to death by arrows, the prefectural city of Cod still held a major advantage.

"Gates, go destroy that corridor for me." Linley pointed at the thick steel canopy-bridge of one of the siege escalades.

Once that hundred-meter-wide, multiple-meter-thick steel bridge was destroyed, then... there would be a distance of nearly ten meters from the siege escalades to the city walls. Only warriors of a certain rank would be able to leap that distance, and in addition, as they leapt, the city garrison would be able to use their spears to welcome them as they landed...

"Yes, Lord," Gates acknowledged in his loud voice.

Boone, Ankh, and Hazer didn't hesitate at all as they headed out as well. But Barker, since he was now a Saint, couldn't get involved.

Gates' body was blazing with battle-qi, and in his hands, he was wielding that 5300 pound greataxe. With a mighty leap, he flew directly onto the corridor where the fighting was going on. The bridge was filled with people, as many soldiers wanted to charge onto the enemy walls.

"Bang!" A terrifying axe-shaped blast of battle-qi energy chopped out, splitting several dozen warriors apart at the waist instantly. Body parts flew everywhere, spraying the surrounding area with blood. Instantly, a large gap appeared on the corridor-bridge.

"Bam!"

Like a demonic god, Gates wielded his terrifying 5,300-pound greataxe as he landed in that empty area. Almost instantly, a large number of enemy soldiers immediately filled up that gap, all of them attacking Gates wildly.

"Hrmph!" Greataxe in hand, Gates delivered a mighty blow to the bridge beneath him.

The greataxe fell down, as gently as a falling leaf, striking against the steel bridge. Only a gentle clink was heard, but then... a massive hole appeared in the steel bridge, and a huge amount of steel dust was suddenly picked up and carried away by the wind.

Wielding something heavy as though it were light!

"Bang!" Gates' battle-qi blasted out in all directions like countless arrows, killing all of the surrounding and attacking soldiers.

"It really is thick," Gates murmured confidently. This sturdy steel bridge was something that even a peak-stage Undying Warrior of the ninth rank was unable to chop through at a blow. However, the blow from Gates' greataxe had chopped halfway through it, with only a meter of thickness remaining.

"No!" Many people from the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows, upon seeing this, stared with wide eyes.

"Break apart!" Gates brought his greataxe gently down a second time.

"Bang!" That thick steel bridge split into two parts, and the part that was lying against the wall fell down. A large number of soldiers fell down as well. The

effectiveness of the siege escalade had instantly been halved.

If they wanted to cross to the walls, the only choice was to jump over.

But the enemy guards had their weapons pointed towards them, with spear tips and sword tips all aimed in their direction. You want to jump? Then jump! You'll know what happens if you do...

"Bang!" "Bang!" One steel bridge after another was broken through as Gates, Boone, Ankh, and Hazer, these four terrifying Undying Warriors of the peak of the ninth rank, moved through all ten of the siege escalades.

The forces of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows, who had seen victory within reach, all began to feel bitterness and despair.

"We almost succeeded. Bastards." Weiss Porter let out an angry growl.

If the earlier situation had persisted, even though the enemy continued to attack with magicite cannons and arrows, Weiss Porter was confident... that after sustaining casualties of approximately seven to eight hundred thousand, they would have destroyed the enemies.

"Weiss Porter, now what?" Guillermo looked at him.

Weiss Porter looked at him as well. "It's still early. Wait for five in the morning." Guillermo and Weiss Porter both tacitly understood.

"Although the steel bridges were destroyed, the siege escalades still have some effect." Weiss Porter stared from afar... indeed, many soldiers continued to charge onto the siege escalades, and then, relying on being on the higher ground, shot arrows or slung rocks at the enemies on the walls.

A large number of soldiers even jumped down onto the city walls.

Perhaps the initial casualty rate would be horrendous, but once a small safe area was established, they were still able to fight on fairly even footing.

"They've gone mad." Gates had experienced countless battles, but even he felt a sense of pressure.

Simply too many had died.

Time passed, one minute and one second at a time.

Three in the morning...

Four in the morning...

As time dragged on, the casualties for the defenders reached nearly two hundred thousand as well. For their casualties to be at such a terrifyingly high number, one could totally imagine how many had died on the side of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows.

When five in the morning came, Guillermo and Weiss Porter looked at each other.

“Weiss Porter, as you said. It is time to use our trump card,” Guillermo said.

Trump Card

“Bang!” “Bang!” “Bang!” ...

Those magicite cannons continued to attack, as though money truly was no obstacle at all. Beneath the prefectural city of Cod, there was a veritable sea of flame, and the night sky was split up by countless beautiful flashes of light.

From far away, the commanders of the joint forces, Weiss Porter and Guillermo, had shadows cast across their faces.

“Trump card?”

Weiss Porter looked at Guillermo. Snickering, he said, “Lord Cardinal Guillermo, I think that these exhausted soldiers of the prefectural city of Cod would be easily defeated once the Sacred Legion of the Radiant Church attacks. There’s no need for my side to join in.”

The trump card of the Radiant Church – the Sacred Legion!

The Sacred Legion!

In this area of the Anarchic Lands, the Radiant Church had spent a tremendous amount of effort and materials to cultivate this mighty legion.

The Sacred Legion only had a total of thirty thousand people.

Five thousand of the soldiers in this legion were warriors of the seventh rank, while the other twenty five thousand were at least of the fifth rank in power. In the other legions, a warrior of the fifth rank might be considered an elite soldier, but in this legion, they would only be the weakest of soldiers.

It must be understood that the jumping abilities of warriors of the seventh rank alone would allow them to flip past those thirty-meter-tall city walls.

Such a trump card of a legion, upon entering battle, would definitely be an unbalancing force. However, cultivating such a legion was simply too difficult.

The cost of training them was far larger than that of training even the million-man army.

“If Linley’s Saints break our agreement and eradicated our Sacred Legion, that would be terrible.” Guillermo secretly mused. He and Weiss Porter were thinking the same thing. They were both afraid that the Saints would betray the agreement and take part in the battle.

For example, those Saint-level dragons. For example, Linley and the other Supreme Warriors.

If a few hundred thousand ordinary soldiers were killed, the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows could easily recruit a few hundred thousand more. All they needed was a year or two of training. But the Sacred Legion... every single soldier represented years worth of training and expenditures. Each lost soldier wouldn’t easily be replenished by money alone.

“Weiss Porter, are you joking?” Guillermo’s face sank.

Weiss Porter immediately laughed, “Guillermo, don’t be angry. The Shadow Legion of the Cult of Shadows will attack at the same time.”

The Shadow Legion was built up by the Cult of Shadows for the express purpose of countering the Sacred Legion. Their power was on par.

These were two terrifyingly strong legions.

Although each had only thirty thousand soldiers, and combined they only numbered sixty thousand, to the two sides, the worth of these trump card legions wasn’t any less than that of a million-man army.

Atop the city walls, Linley and Barker were watching the battle as though it had nothing to do with them.

The city guards in the area had been dismissed.

“There’s nobody there.” The enemy soldiers clearly saw an area where only two people were standing.

“Quick, attack over there.”

The battle was so frantic that none of the soldiers were thinking clearly. Seeing an ‘opening’ in the walls, they immediately charged over. But just as

they ran up the escalate ladders and charged at Linley and Barker with their weapons raised...

“Slash.”

Instantly, countless knives of wind formed a wall. The three warriors who had been the first to charge over were instantly turned into meat paste, and even some of the warriors close to the top of the escalate ladders were chopped into ground meat. This scene... replayed itself over and over throughout the battle. Nobody was able to draw near to these two.

“I’m feeling really motherfucking stifled,” Barker cursed softly.

Barker looked at Linley. Linley didn’t seem to feel anything at all. Barker couldn’t help but say, “Lord Linley, how can you just keep watching?”

“Why can’t I?” Linley stared below.

“Oh?” Barker looked at Linley questioningly.

Linley laughed calmly. “I now somewhat understand how the War God feels. Let worldly matters develop naturally. People will always die in wars. If I hadn’t founded the Baruch Kingdom, perhaps even more people would have died in those endless, chaotic wars.”

Linley looked down below. “The mortal world has its rules. And we, we have our rules as well!”

“I will hold to our agreement. Even if they break through to the magicite mines and seize them, I won’t interfere,” Linley said calmly.

Barker grew frantic. “But what about that pocket dimension room we discovered?”

“What are you afraid of?”

Linley laughed calmly. “It is impossible for non-Saints to enter that secret room. But which Saints would dare trespass on my territory?” Linley was already viewing this battle with a transcendent gaze and mind. It didn’t really matter if they won or they lost...

And in addition, the pocket dimension was immovable.

“You speak truth, Lord.” Barker began to understand.

Upon reaching the Saint level, they possessed an eternal lifespan. They had transcended past ordinary humans. In truth, worldly battles and affairs no longer belonged to them, and Saints no longer belonged in them either. But although they understood this in their heart, both Barker and Linley had a hint of anticipation...

The anticipation that their side would prove victorious.

“Not good.” Barker’s face suddenly changed.

Beneath the city, a large number of elite warriors charged towards the walls at high speed. They were thickly clustered and definitely numbered in the tens of thousands. This large group of elite warriors ran at an astonishing pace, and with each flicker of their bodies, they moved twenty or thirty meters. In less than a minute, they would arrive at the city walls.

“Fire!”

The magicite cannons from the east gate had been shifted over as well. More than twenty magicite cannons fired simultaneously, blasting down balls of light at the soldiers below.

“Swish!” “Swish!”

Many elite soldiers immediately dodged at high speed, but the magicite cannon attacks were simply too fast. Despite many of the elite soldiers being able to dodge the center of the blasts, a few unlucky soldiers would still die, while the others at the boundaries of the blasts would be injured as well.

But there was only time for one blast!

The magicite cannons only had enough time to fire once before the elite soldiers reached the city walls.

“There’s so many people. Tens of thousands. Where did all these powerful warriors come from? There’s so many warriors of the seventh rank.” Barker felt a hint of amazement.

Linley noticed the large number of elite soldiers that had appeared out of nowhere as well. Given Linley and Barker’s current levels of power, they were

instantly able to judge the power of these soldiers. “So many are of the seventh rank? They are just like the ace regiments of the Knights of the Radiant Church that I saw back in the Holy Union.”

“This must be an elite force built up by the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows, akin to the Eight Ace Regiments. This is their true elite force, here in the Anarchic Lands,” Linley guessed.

And that was indeed the case.

“Whoosh!” “Whoosh!” “Whoosh!” “Whoosh!”

A large number of warriors reached the city walls, and with a sudden leap, they easily cleared the thirty foot walls. The thickly clustered warriors all arrived atop the walls, and all of them possessed the power of the seventh rank.

“Bang!” Swords and sabers flashed everywhere, and battle-qi exploded throughout the area.

Immediately, almost ten or twenty thousand garrison guards died. The garrison troops were only of the second or third ranks in power. The warriors of the fifth rank would be considered elites amongst them. But these warriors who had jumped onto the walls were all of the seventh rank, and there were nearly ten thousand of them.

A slaughter!

They couldn’t fight back at all! And at the same time...

A huge number of warriors of ‘only’ the fifth and sixth ranks began to climb up the escalade ladders at high speed.

Although there were hundreds of thousand soldiers on the south walls, only twenty or thirty thousand troops could fight against the warriors of the seventh rank at any given time. And when the fifty thousand warriors of the fifth and sixth ranks charged up...

“We lose.”

Barker sighed.

After the sixty thousand elite troops of the Sacred Legion and the Shadow Legion swept upwards, hundreds of thousands of normal troops followed

behind them in escalate ladders. The entire length of the south city walls was occupied with countless enemies, who swarmed forward like an endless stream of ants, attacking the inner city of Cod.

But where Linley and Barker stood, no matter how many warriors charged over, they were all transformed into mincemeat by those countless wind blades.

“Let’s leave.” Linley immediately flew out of the walls.

“Can’t let them have those magicite cannons,” Barker said. Barker’s body flashed by the city walls, and one magicite cannon after another was stored into his interspatial ring. How could those enemy soldiers possibly block the Saint-level expert, Barker?

“Jeeze, Barker...” Linley shook his head and chuckled.

“All done.” Barker flew back to Linley’s side.

Barker and Linley flew into the air above the prefectural city of Cod. They could clearly see what was happening throughout the prefectural city. Watts clearly had been prepared for this breach, as a large number of troops were currently retreating through the west gate and the north gates.

At the same time, many soldiers remained within the prefectural city of Cod, preparing to do battle and prevent the enemy forces from chasing.

A large number of troops were fleeing towards the north of the prefectural city of Cod.

Watts stared at the distant prefectural city of Cod and let out a low sigh. In the end, he had still lost. When those two terrifying enemy legions had appeared, Watts knew that there was no way they could block them. The Radiant Church and the Cult of the Shadows, combined, had sixty thousand elite soldiers, ten thousand of whom were of the seventh rank.

To warriors of the seventh rank, walls might as well not exist.

How could one possibly defend against such a monstrously powerful legion?

“Watts, what are you sad about?” Gates was next to him. “If we lose, we lose. When I was in the Eighteen Northern Duchies, losing battles was a

commonplace event. But of course... I still felt pretty pissed.”

Gates was resigned as well.

When those sixty thousand elite soldiers attacked, how many of them could he, Gates, kill by himself? After all, they wouldn't just run up to him and wait for him to kill them.

“If I was a Grand Magus Saint, that would be wonderful. I'd just cast a forbidden spell and wipe them all out,” Gates secretly mumbled to himself.

Right at this time, Linley and Barker flew over. They had seen Gates, Boone, Ankh, and Hazer, and thus they flew down. As they did, Linley asked Watts, “Watts, how many people have you assigned to fight the rearguard action to hold off the enemy?”

“A hundred thousand.”

Watts replied. “We have a total of a hundred and fifty thousand soldiers in full retreat, none of them wounded. As for the remaining hundred thousand, half of them are injured, while the other half are at full strength. By relying on the traps and secret tunnels we dug early on, they should be able to stop the enemy forces for an hour.”

“An hour?” Linley asked.

“Right. An hour. After an hour, my men will send a signal arrow, and all the soldiers will immediately surrender.” Watts sighed. “There's nothing for it. If they fight to the end, they will all die.”

Linley nodded with understanding.

In the Anarchic Lands, for the defeated soldiers to surrender was quite normal.

“One hour will be more than enough for us to pull away from them,” Watts said.

There were two hundred thousand soldiers stationed at the magicite mines, and the defenses had been prepared long ago. Watts and his men had fled in the early morning, while in the afternoon, the hundred and fifty thousand survivors arrived at the magicite mines. As soon as they arrived, they were

immediately sent to the administrative areas to rest and eat.

Nightfall. Within a tent.

Linley, Barker, and the others were seated together, eating dinner. At this time, someone arrived. The person who had arrived was Delia, and her arrival instantly caused everyone to stop eating. Even Barker, Gates, and Boone all immediately came over to greet her.

“Linley, how can you keep eating?” Delia was somewhat frantic.

“What is it?” Linley looked at Delia.

Delia said, “The forces of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows have almost arrived. What are we going to do?”

“What are we going to do? What can we do?” Linley shook his head helplessly. “Delia, right now, a large number of people are mining as fast as they can. We’ve already finished mining over a quarter of the total number of gems here.” This was one method as well.

Mine as much as possible.

But suddenly...

“Boss.” Bebe suddenly appeared atop the dinner table. He stared at Linley with his beady little eyes. “The enemies have sent so many people over. Boss, I’ve already brought Zassler over. Let Zassler cast a single forbidden-level spell, ‘Undead Calamity’ and summon an army of millions of undead in a single spell. Exterminate them!”

At this moment, the tent flap opened.

An old man wearing a black robe walked in. He was as thin as a skeleton. It was the Grand Magus Necromancer, Zassler.

“Lord Linley, I am ready to obey your commands at any moment. If you give the order, none of those million soldiers outside will survive.” Zassler’s eyes flashed with a cold green light. Zassler’s army of undead didn’t just include ordinary undead. They even included undead of the ninth rank, and even quite a few of the Saint-rank.

To exterminate that million-man army was as easy as raising his hand!

An Utter Catastrophe

Everyone in the tent couldn't help but look towards Linley. Without question, Linley was the leader of these Saints.

"Boss!" Bebe called out frantically.

Linley shook his head slightly. "Once we break the agreement, then according to the original text, Desri, the Radiant Church, and the Cult of Shadows will join forces in dealing with us."

"Why are you afraid of them?" Bebe wrinkled his little nose, and said viciously, "If those Saints come, I'll eat them alive. What's more, Boss, Desri probably won't act against you. He clearly was on our side."

Desri was indeed on Linley's side.

"Zassler's usage of a forbidden spell to summon an army of millions of undead would, without question, result in victory. Desri might not come attack us as a result of us violating the agreement. However, if we act in such a way, we would essentially be destroying Desri's reputation."

Desri had given him face. He couldn't make Desri look bad like that.

"Goddamnit. What a pain in the ass." Bebe was somewhat frantic. "Boss, Zassler can just summon undead that aren't Saints. As long as non-Saint undead do the attacking, then that wouldn't be considered a violation, right?"

Bebe's words made Delia immediately begin to laugh.

Linley swatted Bebe on the head. "Bebe, you are equivocating. How is the ultimate summoning spell, 'Undead Calamity', different from other forbidden spells? In fact, in terms of power, the Undead Calamity spell is even stronger. It can even summon Saint-level undead."

"But then we're going to lose!" Bebe said hurriedly.

Linley sighed. “If we lose, we lose. At worst, that just means the enemy will take away the majority of the gems in the magicite mines. Fortunately, we’ve already mined away all of those gems that were on par with magicite cores of beasts of the seventh, eighth, and ninth ranks. Bebe, you’ve finished with those, right?”

After discovering the secret door, Linley immediately mentally reached out to Bebe and had Bebe bring Haeru and the three Saint-level dragons to go to the core area and begin mining.

Although those magicite gems probably were only numerous enough to fill up a house, in terms of price, they were roughly on par with two thirds of the rest of the mine. After all, these gems held enough energy that they were on par with the magicite cores of magical beasts of the seventh, eighth, and ninth ranks.

“We’ve mined them all,” Bebe said hurriedly. “But, we’ve only mined out twenty or 30% of those ordinary magicite gems.”

The 20 to 30% of ordinary magicite gems, combined with the core gems that they had mined, were worth perhaps only 50% of the total value of the magicite mines.



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“Rumble...”

The thickly clustered soldiers quickly formed up into two lines. The enormous, million-man-army seemed like a behemoth as it swept towards the defenses of the magicite mines.

Within the army, Weiss Porter and Guillermo both had smiles on their faces.

“We win.” Guillermo laughed as he looked at the distant magicite mines.

Weiss Porter chuckled. “Don’t celebrate just yet. Nothing is certain until the last moment!”

“I don’t care about Linley’s soldiers. What I’m afraid of is Linley personally

interfering! Or, those Saint-level magic beasts attacking. Our army would probably totally collapse.”

“True.” Guillermo sighed as well.

How effective was their previous agreement in binding Linley?

“First let our army rest. They fought all night, then marched for an entire day. The soldiers haven’t had a chance to rest at all,” Weiss Porter said. “It’s already night. Wait for dawn. Let them rest one night, and then attack again at dawn.”

Right now, the advantage was all on their side. Although their common soldiers were exhausted, those sixty thousand elite soldiers weren’t tired at all.

The weakest soldier of those two legions was of the fifth rank.

During the battle at the prefectural city of Cod, they had only attacked at the very end, and then travelled for a day. Given their power, even staying up for three days and three nights was fine.



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Within the Forest of Darkness.

“Rustle...” In this primeval forest, a soft sound rustled throughout the area. One Stoneater Rat and Shadowmouse after another could be seen, moving in dense ranks... as far as the eye could see, there were Shadowmice and Stoneater Rats. Countless rat-type magical beasts were traveling towards the south side of the Forest of Darkness at high speed.

Gray Stoneater Rats, black Shadowmice, silver Stoneater rats, blue Shadowmice, golden Stoneater Rats, violet Shadowmice...

Rat-type magical beasts of all colors were coming out in a constant stream from within the depths of the Forest of Darkness like a tide, surging towards the south.

Amongst them, three violet-gold rat-type magical beasts were flying in the air above.

“Big Brother, are we being a bit too nasty?” one of the violet-gold rats spoke

out.

“What do you mean, too nasty?” The leader of the violet-gold rats sneered. “We are the kings of the rat-type magical beasts. Since all three of us brothers are making our grand entrance... we have to show off a bit. Also, we only brought a portion of the rat-type magical beasts of the Forest of Darkness. It isn’t as though we brought them all.”

The Forest of Darkness was the home of rat-type magical beasts.

In the Forest of Darkness, rat-type magical beast hordes were terrifying in power. No other magical beasts dared to offend these rat-type magical beast hordes.

Even Saint-level magical beasts didn’t want to offend the Rat Kings.

Each of these violet-gold rats possessed terrifying amounts of power.

“That Linley hasn’t met us a single time yet, has he?” The violet-gold rat in the middle laughed.

“Right. He can be considered as having rendered great merits, for him having taken care of Bebe for so long,” the leading violet-gold rat said.

“Big Brother, don’t be so self-satisfied. From what I’ve learned from my conversations with Bebe, that Linley’s power is quite astonishing. In his full Dragonform, combined with his extremely high understanding of the Laws, you probably aren’t a match for him,” the third violet-gold rat said.

The leading violet-gold rat let out a few snorts. “At his current level of power, I suppose he finally, just barely, qualifies to be Bebe’s ‘Boss’, now.”

Twelve years ago, when Bebe and the violet-gold rat had exchanged blows, Bebe had been at a disadvantage.

But twelve years later, Bebe’s level of power had already reached parity with the violet-gold rat.

“They are moving so slowly,” the leading violet-gold rat said with impatience. Suddenly, it let out a shrill screech. “Shkreeeee!” The piercing sound rang out, and instantly, the masses of Stoneater Rats and Shadowmice below them began to move more quickly.

Wherever the endless tide of rat-type magical beasts went, the other magical beasts immediately scrambled to flee.

Nobody dared to stop them!



*

Linley's forces were all hidden behind their defenses. All they could do was rely on the local geography and environment to stop the enemy. Although they knew the enemy forces were exhausted last night, Linley's 150,000 soldiers were exhausted as well.

The day slowly brightened. This morning was a foggy one.

The fog wasn't very thick, but it prevented a person from seeing beyond a few hundred meters.

"The enemy is moving."

Behind the defenses, the soldiers could clearly hear a multitude of footsteps. Clearly, the enemy forces were charging in this direction. In the mist, one could vaguely begin to see countless soldiers appear like a wave crashing towards them.

Linley, Delia, Bebe, Zassler, Barker, and the others all quietly watched.

"Jeeze, this pisses me off," Bebe grumbled on Linley's shoulders.

Bebe secretly glanced at Linley, but Linley maintained his silence. Who here was happy? Who wouldn't be upset at having to give away half the magicite mine to the enemies? But Linley had signed the agreement, and he didn't want to make Desri look bad. And so, he held to the agreement.

Soon, the hundreds of millions of gold coins worth of magicite gems would belong to the enemy.

Suddenly...

The footsteps came to a halt. At the same time, a loud, world-shaking voice could be heard: "Surrender. There is no way you can resist our army. If you surrender, we definitely won't mistreat you." The words were said quite

suavely.

“He’s rather polite.” Gates snickered.

“Of course.” Zassler let out a sinister sneer. “They are afraid that we Saints will interfere.”

“If you put down your weapons within one minute’s time and surrender, we definitely won’t harm any of you. The countdown begins now.” After the voice finished speaking, not a single one of the 350,000 soldiers surrendered. They all quietly awaited the battle to start.

One minute and one second passed. A minute was a very short period of time.

The entire battlefield was put under terrifying pressure.

Baruch Kingdom’s side saw many soldiers sweating. Their knuckles were white from how tightly they held their weapons.

“Prepare!”

A voice rang out. The battle at the prefectural city of Cod had resulted in almost no losses to the Sacred Legion or the Shadow Legion. Those 60,000 elite soldiers hefted their shields and raised their spears and warblades.

“We’re going to lose!” Gates said in a low voice.

Delia and Bebe looked at Linley, but Linley remained silent.

But just at this time...

Three violet-gold flashes of light suddenly streaked through the air, while at the same time, their excited voices rang out. “Bebe, I’m here! This time, I brought my Big Brother and my second brother with me.”

“Saint-level magical beasts?” Linley turned and saw three violet-gold rats.

This was Linley’s first time meeting Saint-level rat-type magical beasts aside from Bebe, and what’s more, there were three of them.

“What is that sound?” Linley, extremely sensitive to the elemental essences, suddenly sensed a sound from far away. That sound was moving towards them at a very fast speed. Linley spread out his spiritual sense, and suddenly he

sensed...

“So many!!!!”

Countless rat-type magical beasts. Black ones. Blue ones. Violet ones. Gray ones. Silver ones. Gold ones. All sorts of rat-type magical beasts covered the land, like an enormous, endless sea. Countless rat-type magical beasts raised their head and began to let out excited screeches.

“Shkreeeeeeeee!”

“Shkreeeeeeeee!”

Countless terrifying screeches filled the air, the world reverberating with the sound.

“What is that sound?” The Sacred Legion and the Shadow Legion, which was just about to engage in battle, suddenly felt their hearts quiver. The sound was coming from behind the magicite mines, but there were far too many voices, like trillions of magical beasts screeching at the same time.

Weiss Porter and Guillermo’s faces instantly changed.

“What is going on?” Weiss Porter and the others all felt nervous, but they didn’t know what was happening.

Not just them. Even the forces of the Baruch Kingdom felt their hearts shake.

“Magical beasts are coming. All soldiers, remain behind the earthworks. None of you are permitted to go out, nor are you permitted to attack the magical beasts.” Linley’s voice could be heard across their entire camp, and his words immediately caused all the soldiers of the Baruch Kingdom to shout in joy.

But the reaction in the camp of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows was the opposite.

“A magical beast swarm?” Weiss Porter and Guillermo’s faces changed dramatically.

Controlling a swarm of magical beasts to attack wasn’t a violation. After all, the Saint-level magical beasts weren’t personally attacking. For example, the O’Brien Empire had its Vampiric Iron Bull legion, which was a terrifying legion that had hundreds of thousands of Vampiric Iron Bulls along with their

caretakers.

“A swarm of magical beasts? Where did they come from?” Weiss Porter hurriedly said.

Guillermo’s face was ashen pale. “Linley’s rat-type magical beast! Right. It must be that Saint-level rat-type magical beast. The Forest of Darkness is the home of rat-type magical beasts.”

“Shouldn’t be. The rat-type magical beasts of the Forest of Darkness have their own rulers.” Weiss Porter knew very well that the Rat Kings of the Forest of Darkness were violet-gold rats. There was no way they would be under Bebe’s control.

But just at this time...

The squeaks from an endless tide of rat-type magical beasts rang out, and instantly, the horde of rat-type magical beasts covered an area of tens of square kilometers. Tens of kilometers! In other words, as far as the eye could see, the world had become covered with nothing but rat-type magical beasts.

“Wow!”

“Whoah!”

Cries of surprise rang out constantly from Linley’s side. Those rat-type magical beasts all quite orderly avoided Linley’s soldiers, heading towards the forces of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows in a stream. These rat-type magical beasts were generally able to eat even rocks. One could imagine how sharp their fangs and claws were.

Shadowmice were fast. Stoneater Rats were durable.

The entire swarm of rat-type magical beasts charged over. A swarm like this would even be able to devour an entire mountain.

“Wow, buddy, as badass as that?” Bebe’s eyes were bulging and round as he stared at the other three violet-gold rats next to him. “How many rat-type magical beasts did you bring over? My spiritual energy can’t even encompass them all.”

The leading violet-gold rat said with a delighted laugh, “Not many, not many...

this is just a small portion of our forces in the Forest of Darkness. Just a couple hundred million, that's all."

The Ratmageddon Wave

Within the boundless mist, an endless swarm of rats came. All of the warriors, including the Sacred Legion and the Shadow Legion felt terror in their hearts. But despite their terror, they still had to wield their weapons and attack those magical beasts.

If the magical beasts didn't die, they would die!

"Kill!" Arrows rained down like the rain upon the wave of rats, but the defense of the Stoneater Rats was simply too tough, while the Shadowmice were too fast. Only a few Shadowmice were killed.

And then...

The wave of rats slammed into the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows' forces.

"Crunch, crunch." A terrifying series of crunching sounds.

A seemingly infinite number of rats charged forward, biting to death all of the human soldiers who sought to block them. Not only was their flesh stripped; even their bones were devoured. The Sacred Legion and Shadow Legion, all combined, had ten thousand warriors of the seventh rank.

But ten thousand warriors of the seventh rank, in the face of that rat wave, was absolutely nothing.

This was because the rat wave had a terrifying number of rats of the seventh rank, while ordinary Stoneater Rats and Shadowmice of the fifth rank, when charging en masse, could still bite a warrior of the seventh rank to death. Ten thousand warriors of the seventh rank... in front of a tidal wave of hundreds of millions of rats, utterly disappeared.

"Flee!" Some soldiers cried out in terror as they began to run.

Once the first began to flee, many of the other terrified soldiers began to flee

as well. They couldn't resist the rat wave at all.

However...

They couldn't flee!

The Shadowmice and Stoneater Rats were extremely fast, far faster than humans. The fleeing warriors were quickly surrounded, then devoured. Even Guillermo and Weiss Porter were so terrified that their faces turned white, and they quickly began to flee.

"Quick, quick." Weiss Porter and Guillermo didn't try to resist at all.

The attack of the rat wave caused nearly half of the enemy force of a million soldiers to disappear, with not even the bones remaining.

"Linley, it's enough to make them surrender. Don't let this slaughter continue." Delia couldn't bear to watch any more.

Linley glanced at the three Violet-Gold Rat Kings, and one of them grinned towards Delia. "Sure. Hey, Linley, just make the announcement. As long as the humans kneel down and raised their hands up in a token of submission, the rats won't attack them."

Linley nodded slightly.

"Everyone, listen up. Kneel down and raise your hands in surrender. The magical beasts won't attack you if you do so!" Linley's voice rang out like thunder from the skies.

Hearing this sound, the hopeless soldiers immediately began to kneel down and raise their hands up.

At the same time, the Violet-Gold Rat King opened its mouth. "Shkreeeee!"

The high-pitched screech rang out in the mist, and all the rats, as though having heard an order, bizarrely moved passed all of the kneeling soldiers, attacking the other soldiers.

"What to do?" Guillermo was in a state of total panic. Both Weiss Porter and Guillermo were using protective spells to defend themselves.

"How should I know?" Weiss Porter was terrified as well.

Right now, there were over ten rats nearly a meter-long staring at them. The ten rats were either violet colored or gold colored, and the violet-furred rats had hints of gold in their fur, while the gold-furred rats had tints of violet in their fur.

Under a normal situation...

High-level Shadowmice were violet at the seventh rank, and were known as Violet Shadowmice.

High-level Stoneater Rats were gold at the seventh rank, and were known as Gold Stoneater Rats.

But from the seventh rank to the Saint level, the fur of Violet Shadowmice would slowly turn a violet-gold color, while the Gold Stoneater Rats would see their fur also turn to a gold-violet color.

These ten rats were clearly of the eighth or ninth ranks.

“Squeak squeak.” One of the Stoneater Rats of the ninth rank suddenly pounced at them, biting through Guillermo’s Lightguard spell at one chomp. At the same time, Weiss Porter’s magical defense also came under assault and was broken through, but the ten rats didn’t immediately continue their assaults.

They were very intelligent, not one bit lower than humans in intelligence.

Guillermo and Weiss Porter exchanged glances. Their foreheads were covered with sweat, and their backs were also slick with sweat. They understood... if these ten rats charged toward them, they would instantly be bitten to death. Not even their bones would be left.

But just at this time, Linley’s voice rang out.

After exchanging glances, the two didn’t hesitate at all.

“Thud!” Their knees hit the ground, and their hands raised up.

Instantly, eight of the ten rats left, while the other two stayed there, staring at them. The rats were very smart; the ten rats had instantly discovered that these two experts of the ninth rank, Guillermo and Weiss Porter, were the enemy leaders.

Enemy leaders had to be taken alive, of course.

After the morning fog slowly dissipated, Linley's side could clearly see that large number of kneeling enemy soldiers, all of whom were surrounded by ten, no, a hundred times their number of rats and mice. The visual effect of these massive numbers alone were awesome and terrifying to behold.

"Swish!" A sudden flash of light, as a gold-colored rat with a tint of purple in its fur scurried over, letting out two squeaks.

"What? Only three hundred thousand enemy soldiers are still alive?" Bebe said in surprise. Bebe naturally could understand the language of rat-type magical beasts.

The three Violet-Gold Rat Kings narrowed their eyes in delight. One of them looked at Bebe. "Bebe, what do you think?" Bebe looked at the endless sea of rats and sighed, "They really are powerful. It'd be so awesome if these rats obeyed my command."

Who could possibly resist an army of hundreds of millions of rat-type magical beasts?

"Oh, that's easy." The leader of the violet-gold rats let out a few high-pitched screeches, and Bebe instantly grew excited.

Linley looked at Bebe in confusion.

"Boss, from today onwards, these hundreds of millions of rats will obey my command. Haha!" Bebe was extremely excited. At the same time, he also let out a few high-pitched squeaks which also encompassed the entire battlefield. The countless rat-type magical beasts all lowered their heads and bowed towards Bebe.

Linley was secretly shocked.

Stoneater Rat swarms and Shadowmice swarms were frighteningly strong. Linley had known of this since he was young. But Linley had felt that a rat wave of several million rat-type monsters was already very frightening. But several hundred million... this was simply terrifying.

"Which army can possibly resist these hundreds of millions of rats?" Linley secretly shook his head.

This was like when the magical beasts of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts came charging out. Even Fenlai City itself was broken through in moments, and both the Holy Union as well as the Dark Alliance lost a third of their territory. One could imagine how terrifying magical beast swarms were. And the Forest of Darkness... was the home of rat-type magical beasts.

This small portion of the rat-type beasts within it was enough to lay waste to an empire.

But of course, that was assuming Saints did not get involved!

The leading Violet-Gold Rat King laughed towards Linley. "Let me introduce myself. My name is Harry!"

"My name's Hart. I'm number two," a second Violet-Gold Rat King said immediately.

The final Violet-Gold Rat King nodded and was about to speak, but Linley interjected, "You must be Harvey, right? Bebe often speaks to me of you." The only Violet-Gold Rat King that Bebe had made friends with in the Forest of Darkness was Harvey. The others, he didn't have much of a relationship with.

"Are the three of you truly giving control of this rat swarm to Bebe?" Linley asked.

This rat swarm was simply too enormous. How could these Rat Kings give them to Bebe to control?

The Violet-Gold Rat King, Harry, said disdainfully, "You don't understand. In the Forest of Darkness, every so often, there will be a massive internal slaughter amongst the rat swarms. More than half will die, and the weak will be destroyed."

"More than half?" Linley felt shocked.

The third-ranked Rat King, Harvey, explained: "It's simple. The lower-ranked the rat, the faster they breed. A single litter can contain a dozen or several dozen. How can that be allowed to continue? If that continues, the Forest of Darkness wouldn't be large enough for them to survive in. That's why they engage in internal warfare, weeding out the weak and lowering the numbers."

Linley understood now.

If the rat-type magical beasts were allowed to develop as they pleased, most likely the entire Forest of Darkness would be devoured by them. Their numbers had to be controlled.

“Thus, Bebe.” The Rat King named Harvey patted Bebe’s shoulder with his little paw and said in a friendly manner, “This rat swarm is yours to control. It doesn’t matter how many you get killed. The Forest of Darkness needs to keep the number of rats under control anyhow. Sooner or later, the weaker ones will die.”

Linley couldn’t help but sigh inwardly.

No wonder there were so many rats of the fifth through seventh ranks, and even several that were higher. So the weak ones had been weeded out long ago. Those grey Stoneater Rats and black Shadowmice were probably still in the growing phase.

“Don’t worry. I’ll definitely complete your mission and let more than half of them die.” Bebe chortled, then looked at Linley. “Boss, how about... let’s use these rats to take over the entire Anarchic Lands?”

“Unify the Anarchic Lands?”

Linley’s body shook slightly, but then he laughed.

“Boss, the two enemy leaders are being escorted over.” Weiss Porter and Guillermo were being brought over.

“Guillermo?” Linley looked at Guillermo. This was a familiar face.

Seeing Linley, Guillermo forced out a smile. Linley laughed calmly. “This time, the Radiant Church and Cult of Shadows have really tested my limits. Because of our agreement, I had to just watch the battle happen and not interfere.”

Guillermo and Weiss Porter’s hearts were trembling.

“It’s fine. I’ll let your Radiant Church and Cult of Shadows also learn what that feels like.”

Linley looked at Bebe and laughed. “Bebe, from today onwards, join forces with Barker. Let the rat swarm and the human army attack together. Divide into

ten units and begin to attack the territory of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows in the Anarchic Lands.”

“Yes! I, Bebe, will definitely succeed.” Bebe intentionally puffed out his chest, then issued a very proper military salute.

Barker’s eyes were shining as well. “Lord Linley, don’t worry. With these hundreds of millions of rats, uniting the Anarchic Lands will be simplicity itself.” By now, even the elite legions of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows had been destroyed. Who could possibly block these rats?

Guillermo and Weiss Porter’s faces instantly turned even paler.

They exchanged glances, terror in their eyes. They could imagine what was going to happen.

Yulan calendar, year 10022. September.

What would later be described as the war of the ‘Ratmageddon Wave’ began. Hundreds of millions of rats, divided into ten units, each containing the terrifying number of tens of millions of rats, began to move in unison with Baruch Kingdom legions of twenty thousand human warriors.

The hundreds of millions of rats and the two hundred thousand human warriors had been divided into ten groups.

These ten groups began to attack the Cult of Shadows and the Radiant Church in the Anarchic Lands.

Rat-type magical beasts of the eighth and ninth ranks could understand human speech, and in addition, some of the eighth-and ninth-ranked experts of the Baruch Kingdom set up soulbinding contracts with some of the powerful rat-type magical beasts. This made it even easier to control the rat swarm.

The rat wave was unstoppable!

The attacking rat waves, even when faced with giant falling boulders by city guards, were able to chew holes straight through the walls. After all, the Shadowmice and Stoneater Rats often ate rocks for food. They bore straight through the walls, then swept through like a flood into the cities. The city guards simply weren’t able to stop them at all.

Wherever the rat wave passed, cities crumbled and surrendered.

Even the Sacred Legion and the Shadow Legion had been annihilated. Who could resist such a terrifying rat swarm?

The 'Ratmageddon Wave' was only comparable to the 'Apocalypse Day' on year 10000 of the Yulan calendar. In addition, the difference between this and the 'Apocalypse Day' was that this time... the boundless rat wave listened to the commands of Linley's side.

This news quickly spread to the O'Brien Empire, the Yulan Empire, and the various other major forces.

At the same time, this information quickly spread towards the headquarters of the Cult of Shadows and the Radiant Church. But what could they do? After all... Linley hadn't deployed any of his Saints to join the battle. He only deployed an army of magical beasts.

However, the number of magical beasts in his army was simply too astonishing.

Meeting Invitation

The Sacred Isle. The ninth floor of the Radiant Temple.

At this moment, the atmosphere was an extremely depressing one. The air was so thick and stifling, it seemed to have turned solid.

The Holy Emperor Heidens, Praetor Osenno, Zealot Commander Lehman, and Lord Fallen Leaf, the spiritual leader of the Ascetics. These four high-level individuals were all present. They were staring at the news they had received. Their faces had all become exceedingly ugly to behold.

Silence!

After receiving this news, nobody spoke. Everyone understood the grave importance this news represented. Perhaps to Linley... worldly power, land, and kingdoms meant nothing. Even if the Baruch Kingdom were to disappear, it wouldn't mean much to him.

But it was different for the Radiant Church.

"Rat wave. A rat wave!" Lord Fallen Leaf was frowning mightily. His skinny, emaciated face had a bitter look on it. "The terrifying rat wave of the Forest of Darkness. Why do they obey Linley? This is something that had never happened before."

Heidens spoke in a low voice. "Most likely it is Linley's magical beast. It is that Saint-level black Shadowmouse that is controlling them."

"Saint-level rat-type magical beasts should be Violet-Gold Rat Kings!" Osenno shook his head. "Although Linley's rat-type magical beast is a Saint, but... the Rat Kings of the Forest of Darkness are Violet-Gold Rat Kings. All Shadowmice and Stoneater Rats there listen to the orders of the Violet-Gold Rat King race."

This was a truth. All the experts of the continent knew this truth.

The highest echelon of the Yulan continent was the five Deities, with the

mysterious King of the Forest of Darkness being one of them. In all the records of the Church, even the earliest ones before the High Priest had appeared, there were notes regarding this King of the Forest of Darkness.

The most ancient of the five Deities.

The most mysterious one.

Never showing himself. Never struggling for power.

But nobody dared to offend him. No matter how powerful, no one dared to offend him.

All the major powers knew that this mysterious King of the Forest of Darkness had one hobby; he loved rat-type magical beasts. With his help, the rat-type magical beasts became an enormous, powerful race in the Forest of Darkness, and the Violet-Gold Rat Kings became amongst the highest tier of Saint-level magical beasts.

Even Saint-level magical beasts such as Nine-Headed Serpent Emperors, Worldbears, and Bloody-eyed Maned Lions weren't much stronger than these Violet-Gold Rat Kings.

"Enough." Heidens frowned. "Enough discussion about why the rat swarm listens to Linley. What matters right now is how to resolve this situation. The situation is extremely grave. I imagine all of you understand this quite well."

Osenno, Lehman, and Lord Fallen Leaf all maintained their silence.

Heidens glanced at each of them. "The 'Apocalypse Day' already caused us to lose over a hundred million believers. The Radiant Sovereign is already unhappy with the loss of so much faith energy. Once Linley takes over the Anarchic Lands, then the Church will definitely be destroyed by him. In less than a hundred years, there will perhaps be few to no believers in the Radiant Church in the Anarchic Lands.

Faith!

This was one of the most important reasons why the Radiant Church existed. They had lost a tremendous amount of faith energy last time. They had been very fortunate, for the Radiant Sovereign had not punished them for this.

But if they were to lose even more...

The repercussions would be unimaginable!

“No matter what, we cannot allow our Radiant Church’s foundations in the Anarchic Lands to be destroyed. This colossal amount of faith energy cannot be allowed to be lost,” Lord Fallen Leaf said in a low voice.

“Right. It cannot be lost,” Zealot Commander Lehman said as well.

Osenno’s lips quirked up. “Faith energy is important to us, but not necessarily to Linley. Linley most likely doesn’t have much interest in land either. We can negotiate with him.”

“Right.” The eyes of the other three lit up.

This wasn’t unresolvable.

Heidens paused for a moment, then immediately ordered, “Since that’s the case, then how about this. Lehman, you stay at the Sacred Isle for now. All matters at the Sacred Isle will be under your control. Don’t allow Linley to ambush us and destroy our headquarters. As for Fallen Leaf and Osenno, you two come with me, along with six Angel Saints.”

The emaciated Lord Fallen Leaf nodded slightly.

Osenno approved as well.

The Radiant Church had human Saints as well, but the potential of human Saints was far greater than that of the Angels. The Church would rather use the Angels as cannon fodder than allow their human Saints to die.

With the Holy Emperor Heidens as their leader, the three pillars of the Radiant Church, Heidens, Osenno, and Lord Fallen Leaf, alongside six Angel Saints, quickly flew away from the Sacred Isle and away from the ocean, heading towards the Anarchic Lands.

As for the Cult of Shadows, the importance they placed on faith power was no less than that of the Radiant Church’s.

The various Saint-level pillars of the Cult of Shadows, such as the Dark Patriarch, also headed towards the Anarchic Lands.

In the southern part of the Anarchic Lands, on a desolate official road, the massive tide of rats accompanied the human warriors in a quite orderly fashion, continuing their attacks. The hundreds of millions of rats and the two hundred thousand human warriors had been divided into ten armies.

Each army had tens of millions of rats and twenty thousand human warriors.

The main use of the human warriors was to placate the citizens of the cities. Within the twenty thousand human soldiers, there was a carriage. This was the only carriage in the entire army.

And within the carriage, there was only... Bebe!

Within the spacious carriage, Bebe stretched his two rear claws out as he lazily lay down while chatting spiritually with Linley. "Boss, five armies under my control have already taken down six prefectural cities and dozens of small cities. How about you? How's training in the pocket dimension going? Oh, fine... I won't bother you anymore."

"I'm so bored."

Bebe let out a resigned sigh.

Although Bebe was roughly two thousand kilometers away from the magicite mines, Linley and Bebe both possessed so much spiritual energy that, when combined with their 'bond of equals' type of soul-binding, they could still chat at such a distance. Their range was double that of Linley and Haeru's.

Twelve years ago, Linley and Haeru could mentally talk at a distance of a thousand kilometers.

By now, Linley and Haeru could talk at a distance of two thousand kilometers. Linley and Bebe naturally could talk at an even greater distance.

"Hey, where are we? How much farther from the next prefectural city?" Bebe said loudly to the outside guard.

Immediately, the soldier pulled open the carriage window and said respectfully, "Milord, according to the maps, we have another fifty kilometers to the next prefectural city."

"As far as that?" Bebe muttered, then closed his little eyes. "I guess I'd better

take another nap first.”



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“The rat swarm is coming, the rat swarm is coming!” Sounds of terror from the city walls.

Atop the walls of this prefectural city, the faces of the thousands of soldiers were utterly pale. Seeing the endless wave of magical beasts in the desolate wilderness, they were all terror-stricken. Even the city governor had giant beads of sweat appear on his forehead.

“What to do?” The city governor was totally baffled.

A nearby city manager said with terror, “Lord City Governor, this rat wave is simply too terrifying. We can’t stop them. It’s... it’s better if we surrender.” As he spoke, his voice lowered to a whisper. The soldiers of the prefectural city on the wall had all seen the enormous number of rats coming, with a thin line of human soldiers mixed in.

“Surrender, won’t kill!”

“Surrender, won’t kill!”

“Surrender, won’t kill!”

The human soldiers immediately let out an enormous unified chant. This earth-shaking chant, mixed with the terrifying, endless rat wave, caused many guards to throw down their weapons. After all, even before the rat swarm had arrived, these people had heard of how terrifying the rat swarm was.

“Lord Bebe.”

The carriage suddenly halted, and Bebe opened his little eyes blearily. Just as Bebe’s eyes were beginning to focus, his little eyes suddenly turned absolutely round, and with a ‘swish’, he disappeared from inside the carriage.

The city had already surrendered, and the countless rats had been preparing to enter the city. But suddenly, not a single rat was moving.

This was because a group of people were standing there in mid-air, the leader

of them a skinny, bald man. Heidens. A terrifying aura spread out from Heidens, terrifying the below rats so badly that they all knelt down, not daring to move.

“A Saint-level expert!” The human warriors below felt a hint of terror in their hearts.

Seeing this, a hint of a calm smile appeared on Heiden’s face.

The air quivered, and Bebe, who had previously been inside the carriage, appeared in mid-air. Bebe’s eyes stared fixedly at Heidens. His voice was extremely shrill. “You damn baldy, even Osenno is standing behind you. So you are that so-called Holy Emperor of the Radiant Church?”

Damn baldy?

Osenno, Lord Fallen Leaf, and the two Angel Saints standing behind Heidens felt amused.

A hint of a faint smile remained on Heidens’ face. Like a benevolent father, he looked gently at Bebe. “So you are Linley’s magical beast. I am indeed the Holy Emperor, Heidens. Today, I have come because I hope to have a good negotiation with Linley.”

“Oh?” Bebe’s beady little eyes rolled.

“Alright. You wait,” Bebe said loudly. “My Boss is still back in the kingdom. I can’t notify him. You’ll need to wait half a day.”

Heidens smiled and nodded. “Fine. Linley can choose the meeting location as well.” Heidens’ attitude was quite modest.

Bebe’s beady little eyes rolled again, and then he said loudly, “Fine. Just stay here at this prefectural city. I’ll come looking for you in a bit.” Bebe let out a sharp screech, and instantly, the rats below all obediently retreated out of the city, no longer attacking it.

Seeing this, Heidens, Osenno, and Lord Fallen Leaf all felt shock in their heart.

As for Bebe, he transformed into a black streak of light, flying towards the north. As he flew, Bebe began to reach out to Linley. “Boss, quick. Stop training. Something big is going down.”

In the depths of the magicite mine, a gentle wind blew past. Linley’s body

appeared in mid-air, while Zassler immediately flew out as well.

“Lord Linley, the value of this pocket dimension room is definitely on par with any divine artifact.” Zassler sighed in amazement. This was Zassler’s first trip into the pocket dimension room. Just then, Linley and him had been training inside.

Zassler, having been initiated into the secrets of necromancy, knew many occult mysteries, far more than Linley did.

Zassler knew very well that a Demigod definitely would not be able to create such a stable pocket dimension.

“Enough of that for now. Just then, Barker’s magical beast notified him that the experts of the Cult of Darkness have arrived. And then, Bebe contacted me as well.” A hint of a smile was on Linley’s lips. “The Cult of Shadows and Radiant Church are both frantic now.”

“Naturally.” Zassler laughed. “Lord Linley, you don’t care about territory, but religious organizations greatly value the power of faith. If they lose a huge amount of territory, they might even have a punishment fall down upon them from the Divine Plane of Light and Divine Plane of Darkness.”

“When their soldiers attacked my territory, I endured the entire time. But now, these people have popped out. I want to see what they have to say!” Linley’s eyes had a hint of coldness flash past them.

“Zassler, let’s go.”

Linley’s body transformed into a flash of light, streaking gracefully towards the south. Zassler laughed, then followed him. Only, Zassler’s ‘laugh’, when paired with his deathly, netherworldly eyes, was simply terrifying to behold.

While flying over.

Linley’s eyes turned cold as he issued a mental order. “Haeru, you and those three Saint-level dragons come as well.” Immediately, the Saint-level magical beasts, the Blackcloud Panther, the Tyrant Wurm, the Golden Dragon, and the Thunder Lizard all flew out of Mt. Blackraven.

Shameless

Above the mighty Liuyan River, a large ship was gliding its way through the waters, but not a single person was on the deck.

In the uppermost inner deck of the ship, however, experts were as numerous as the clouds.

Every single person within this massive inner deck was a Saint-level expert. Within the hall, there were nine chairs, divided into three sides.

Linley, Barker, and Zassler were seated on one side.

The Holy Emperor Heidens, Praetor Osenno, and Lord Fallen Leaf were seated on another side, while on the other side were the forces of the Cult of Shadows: Dark Patriarch Affleck, Senior Judge O'Casey, Fallen Angel Leader Cramerson.

Behind each of the two sides were a number of Angel Saints or Fallen Angel Saints.

Heidens and Affleck shared a glance, a strange feeling in their heart. The two of them were the leaders of two major religions, and they were enemies to each other.

But today, they were allies.

The reason for this bizarre transformation was Linley. An astonishing genius who had grown at rapid speed. Despite his youth, he had reached one of the utmost peaks of power amongst the experts of the continent. Even figures as exalted as the Holy Emperor and the Dark Patriarch had to lower their noble heads in front of Linley and speak soft words to negotiate with him.

"Heidens. Affleck." Linley had a hint of a smile around his lips. "I don't know why you have invited me to come here. What is this about?" Bebe rested on Linley's thighs, his beady little eyes staring at the Holy Emperor and the Dark Patriarch.

The Dark Patriarch Affleck's skin was as white and tender as that of a young girl's. His voice was also very soft and gentle. "The reason why so many of us from the Cult of Shadows have come is primarily to ask you, Linley, to make a concession and have your rat wave army halt its attacks. I imagine Heidens has come for similar reasons. Heidens, am I right?"

Heidens nodded slightly, then looked at Linley, his gentle gaze giving off the impression of the spring wind. "Linley, would you be willing to make this concession?"

"Are you all dreaming?" Linley didn't know whether to laugh or to cry.

Heidens laughed calmly. "Linley, as long as you are willing to make this concession, our Radiant Church is also willing to pay a high price. We will definitely make you satisfied."

"The same with us. What we pay would definitely be enough to make you feel satisfied, Linley," Affleck said.

Both of the leaders of the two religions were acting submissively towards Linley.

They didn't want to fight against Linley head on. First of all, they had no excuse to do so. If they fought against Linley head on, they would be giving Desri's side an excuse to intervene. And secondly, the Radiant Church, at least, had agreed that within these twenty years, they were not to attack Linley. The time limit wasn't over.

"Linley, what do you think?" Heidens looked at Linley.

Linley felt deep hatred for the Radiant Church. Linley only harbored a dislike for cruel, savage people, but towards those who feigned benevolence, such as Heidens, and for those who pretended to be as kind as a father, but who in reality were merciless, cruel, and utterly pragmatic, Linley felt the utmost of revulsion.

The leaders of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows looked at Linley.

Linley revealed a hint of a smile, but from his mouth, he spoke two words: "No way!"

The faces of both Heidens and Affleck instantly froze, while at the same time, the leader of the Fallen Angels, Cramerson, let out a cold sneer. “Linley, can it be that you rashly imagine that you can set yourself against both the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows?”

“Cramerson.,” the Dark Patriarch, Affleck, immediately barked at him.

Linley looked at the leader of the Fallen Angels, Cramerson, and let out a light laugh. “Based on what I know, for an Angel to Descend, they require a powerful body. Mr. Cramerson, you are so powerful that this body must at least be of the seventh or eighth rank in power. Where did your Cult of Shadows procure such a powerful body?”

In the past, the five Barker brothers had reached the eighth rank just by physical training alone.

Linley knew very well that most people would only be able to reach the sixth rank through physical training. No matter how talented they were, the seventh rank was virtually impossible, with perhaps one appearing every millennium. Only the lineage of the Four Supreme Warriors was able to constantly produce such a miracle just based on physical training.

Thus, this body of Cramerson’s most likely belonged to one of the Four Supreme Warriors.

“Right. Where did that body come from?” Barker stared coldly at the Cult of Shadow’s side.

Back then, him and his four brothers had nearly died and had their bodies transformed into vessels for Angels. Thus, this was a very sensitive topic for him.

“That’s a secret of our Cult of Shadows.” Cramerson smiled. “Enough, Linley. Let’s return to the previous topic. Are you truly unwilling to make any concession at all? If you are willing to make this concession, you will win the eternal gratitude of our Cult of Shadows.”

Gratitude?

Linley, Zassler, Barker, and even Bebe immediately began to laugh loudly, holding their stomachs.

“Linley, you’d best consider it.” Heidens looked at Linley as well.

Linley’s laughter faded, and his face grew solemn. He swept the people in front of him with his gaze and said seriously, “Heidens. Affleck. Listen well. I, Linley, will say this to you plainly. No matter what, I will not withdraw my armies. The unification of the Anarchic Lands is going to happen, and there is nothing that can stop it!”

“Linley, don’t go too far,” Osenno sneered coldly.

In terms of his ability to ‘endure’, Osenno clearly was inferior to Heidens and Lord Fallen Leaf.

“Too far?” Linley frowned, his gaze shooting towards Osenno like cold knives. “Osenno, don’t put on airs in front of me. I’ve already spoken very plainly today. If you want me to withdraw my armies, that’s not going to happen.”

The aura in the cabin of the boat immediately became extremely tense.

“Is there anything else? Speak.” Linley was quite casual.

Bebe added, “Right, if there’s anything you want, hurry up and talk. I’m about to go lead my rat wave army to go take over a huge swathe of land.”

Zassler’s cold, gloomy gaze swept towards the people in the room. He let out a few insidious chuckles, but didn’t speak.

The cabin was silent for a while.

“Fine then.” Heidens sighed. “Our Radiant Church can make one final concession. We can offer the land that we control to your Baruch Kingdom and let you administer it.”

“Oh?” Linley was a bit surprised.

What was Heidens intending? Why was he allowing Linley to take over the entire Anarchic Lands?

“We are willing to do this as well,” Affleck said.

Linley glanced at Heidens, then at Affleck. He mused to himself, “What are these two church leaders planning?”

Heidens looked at Linley. “Our request is very simple. As long as you are

willing to agree to allow our Radiant Church to preach openly throughout your empire and won't suppress our religion at all, we'll be satisfied."

"Preach? Not suppress them at all?" Linley frowned.

Affleck nodded as well. "Our request is the same. Allow our Cult of Shadows to openly preach, and do not suppress it at all."

Linley laughed.

He now understood their intentions. The Cult of Shadows and the Radiant Church greatly valued the power of faith. Compared to that, they didn't care too much about who ruled over a particular territory.

What was truly the most important was that the faith power had to be maintained.

"Linley, the spread of our religions in your empire in the Anarchic Lands won't affect your governance much. You should be able to accept this, right?" Affleck said persuasively.

Heidens just quietly watched Linley, waiting for Linley's answer.

"You'll allow me to unify it, and you'll just proselytize?" Linley looked at the two.

"Right." Heidens immediately nodded. "This is the greatest concession we can make. Linley, if you are willing to agree, then our two sides can become friends, and we can forget about everything that has happened in the past."

If Linley were to agree, then the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows would definitely have to give Linley face in the future. In the future, Linley would be as free and unrestrained in the Yulan continent as a fish in water.

But...

They had forgotten that Linley didn't care about dominance. In his heart, the only thing he had was the self-confidence and desire to reach the pinnacle of training, his love towards his family and friends, and an oath he had etched into his heart.

The oath he had sworn when Grandpa Doehring had died, and he had left the City of Hess!

The oath that he would destroy the Radiant Church entirely, and pull it up by its roots!

His father had died. His mother had died. Grandpa Doehring had died!

“Become friends? Become friends with the Radiant Church?” Linley laughed coldly in his heart. “The Anarchic Lands? If I could have my father, mother, and Grandpa Doehring come back to life, I’d be willing to give up the entire Anarchic Lands, and even all of my own power!!!!”

Linley’s emotions began to swell.

“Become friends? Let you continue to preach?” The rage in Linley’s heart was rising, but his face remained as calm as ever.

Within the quiet cabin, everyone stared at Linley, waiting for Linley’s reply.

Allowing Linley to unify the Anarchic Lands while the two churches continued to preach was the bottom line for these two churches. If Linley was to refuse, then he really would have infuriated these two churches.

The Saints of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows all looked expectantly. Linley’s lips curved upwards slightly. “In my domains, all religions shall be forbidden. If I find one, I’ll destroy one!”

The faces of Heidens, Affleck, Fallen Leaf, O’Casey, and the others instantly changed.

“Did you hear me clearly enough?” Linley looked at them. “That is my response!”

“Hmph!” Praetor Osenno and the leader of the Fallen Angels, Cramerson, suddenly rose to their feet, staring coldly at Linley.

This time, Heidens and Affleck didn’t stop them.

“Linley, this is the bottom line of our Church, and is the bottom line of the Lord. Do you know... what the result will be if you challenge our Lord’s bottom line?” Heidens’ face was calm.

Affleck also looked coldly at Linley.

Instantly, the temperature in the cabin dropped by dozens of degrees. The

tension was so thick, it had congealed. Most likely, if anyone not at the Saint level were to come over, they wouldn't be able to even breathe.

"Bang!" Linley slapped the armrest on his chair, his eyes cold as he swept the people present. "What, you want to threaten me?"

The Saints of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows were silent, but their intentions were clear.

They were indeed threatening him.

"Heidens, have you forgotten the agreement we made twelve years ago?" Linley stared coldly at the two sides.

According to their agreement, Saints were not permitted to engage in worldly battles. But if Saints did not get involved, there was no way they would be able to stop the rat swarms. Thus, once they shed all pretense of cordiality, the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows would definitely send Saints to stop the rat swarms.

Another part of the agreement was that within twenty years, the Radiant Church was not permitted to actively attack Linley.

"Linley, you go too far," Heidens said in a low voice.

Affleck also said, "Linley, a man should know when to take a step back."

"Shameless. Shameless!" Linley stood up, laughing while shaking his head. "I've never seen people as shameless as you lot. When your armies attacked my territory, you charged all the way to the magicite mines, but I didn't interfere, because I held to our agreement."

"But you?"

Linley's mocking gaze swept the Holy Emperor and the Dark Patriarch. "You people are the leaders of two major religions. As soon as the battle starts and you know you are about to lose, you are immediately going to interfere. And you say that I go too far? As far as I can see, you people are utterly shameless, shameless!"

Linley's words made the expressions on the faces of both the Saints of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows turn exceedingly ugly. They were all

people of high status. Naturally, they wouldn't be able to take Linley's satirizing mockery well.

"Watch your mouth," Osenno sneered.

Linley's eyes flashed with cold light. The entire hall was suddenly filled with violet light, and Osenno was so terrified that he instantly transformed into four doppelgangers and retreated at high speed.

"Ah!" "Ah!" Two successive, agonized screams.

The bodies of the two Four-Winged Angels who were standing behind Osenno suddenly were simultaneously sliced into two pieces. Their bodies collapsed, staining the floor with their blood.

The second level of the 'Tempos of the Wind' attack: the combination of the 'Spatial Freezing' and the 'Spatial Folding' concepts!

Osenno clutched his chest, staring at Linley in astonishment.

"Osenno, with the little bit of power that you have, don't yammer and shout in front of me." Linley locked onto Osenno with his cold gaze. "I don't even need to transform to kill someone like you!"

A Falling Out

Osenno felt extremely astonished in his heart. “So... so fast!” Just then, all four of his doppelgangers had been struck at virtually the same time. If he hadn’t hurriedly used two of the Angel Saints as shields, he probably would’ve been killed by Linley in one blow.

Actually, in human form, Linley wasn’t much stronger than Osenno.

The main thing was that Linley had just hit him with a sneak attack. Given Bloodviolet’s speed, Osenno barely had any time to react before Linley’s sword arrived in front of him. If Osenno had been prepared, he wouldn’t have cut such a sorry shape.

“Linley, what do you mean by this!” Heidens cold voice snapped out.

At the same time, Heidens and Fallen Leaf both stood up as well. On the Cult of Shadows’ side, Affleck, O’Casey, and Cramerson stood up as well, all staring coldly at Linley. The leaders of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows, the two major religions of the Yulan continent, had a common enemy...

Linley!

Seeing the look in the eyes of Heidens, Affleck, Fallen Leaf, and the others, Linley actually felt a hint of joy in his heart.

“Grandpa Doehring, can you see this?”

Twenty years!

When he had left the City of Hess and entered the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, it had been year 10000 of the Yulan calendar. At that time, Linley was twenty years old. At that time, Linley had sworn that he would definitely destroy the Radiant Church and break its roots. But he knew... he had to take it a step at a time.

The Radiant Church valued the power of faith.

It had now lost a third of the Holy Union, and only had a population of four or five hundred million. Two hundred million of them came from the Radiant Church's lands in the Anarchic Lands. If Linley unified that area and forbade proselytizing...

This would be an unimaginable blow to the Radiant Church.

"In the past, in my eyes, the Radiant Church was such a huge entity. But now..." Linley glanced at Osenno, who was still clutching his bloody chest. "Even the Praetor, Osenno, is far from being a match for me." Linley murmured to himself, "Grandpa Doebling, just watch. Soon. Soon, the day will arrive when I destroy the entire Radiant Church and uproot it entirely. I only need one more step!"

In Linley's heart, Doebling Cowart held a very high status.

Ever since he was young, he had been taught by Doebling Cowart. Doebling Cowart had been entirely selfless. Whether it be in magic training or in the Straight Chisel School, Doebling Cowart had taught Linley everything. And when they had encountered a crisis, Grandpa Doebling had consumed his own spiritual energy to rescue Linley.

Linley had been waiting a long time to deliver this vicious blow to the Radiant Church.

And now, the Radiant Church had thrown itself on his spear? How could Linley show any mercy?

"What?" Linley glanced at the group of people in the cabin. "You want to take action?" Just as Heidens and Affleck were about to speak, Linley's body suddenly became covered with deep azure draconic scales, and the robe he wore exploded outward, the scraps of cloth blasting out like arrows.

The experts of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows easily blocked these scraps of cloth which had blasted everywhere.

Linley's icy draconic tail swung about behind him, humming as it ripped through the air. Linley's dark golden eyes swept the people in front of him. "If you want action, I'm ready to oblige!"

"I'm waiting as well." Barker's deep voice rang out, and at the same time, his

body immediately began to transform as well, suddenly swelling in size as he expanded to three meters in height. His skin had turned green, and those green veins popping out on top of his muscles, the size of a snake, were terrifying to behold.

Those white, marble-like slabs of armor quickly appeared from his skin, covering Barker's entire body.

Supreme Warrior Saint – Undying Warrior!

"Heh heh." An insidious laugh rang out, and Zassler's hooded gaze swept the people present. "I, Zassler, ever since reaching the Saint level, haven't had a good fight. Radiant Church... the 'kindness' you showed me in the past, I am going to 'repay' you for, right now."

"Harhar! Fighting? Can't leave me, Bebe, out of it." Bebe floated next to Linley.

The situation in the cabin had immediately gone from bad to worse.

The Holy Emperor Heidens and the Dark Patriarch Affleck glanced at each other. They had known early on that although Linley's side had four powerful experts, in terms of strength, Zassler had just reached the Saint level and probably wouldn't be able to threaten the likes of Heidens and Affleck yet.

But Barker was an Undying Warrior Saint. He would be a bit harder to handle.

That Bebe was no less of a threat than Barker.

But the greatest threat... was Linley. Not only was he a Dragonblood Warrior Saint, he also had a terrifyingly high level of understanding of the Laws. Almost all of the previous Supreme Warriors had a very low grasp of the Laws, and not a single one had reached Linley's level of understanding.

He was the most powerful Dragonblood Warrior in history!

"I'll use Oracular Magic. I should be able to tie down Linley. With Fallen Leaf joining forces with me, it should be possible for us to defeat him," Heidens secretly calculated. The power of Oracular Magic wasn't something that Osenno's 'Doppelganger Technique' could match.

Heidens and Affleck understood what the other was thinking from that glance

alone.

“Ha, haha.” Heidens let out three laughs. By pre-arranged signal, Fallen Leaf and Osenno immediately made their moves.

“Bang!”

The ceiling to the ship cabin exploded, and ten shadows burst out towards the sky like arrows. The ship instantly shuddered, and the sailors below immediately jumped into the river and started swimming for the shore.

As they swam, they raised their heads up to stare at the sky.

They were the warriors of the Baruch Kingdom. They had been invited here, and they knew that one of the persons discussing matters in the cabin was the spiritual pillar of support for the entire Baruch Kingdom. Linley.

“Ah, is that, the legendary phoenix?” a sailor’s mouth flapped open in astonishment.

High in mid-air, an enormous flying creature with a wingspan of over a hundred meters had appeared, its entire body covered with fire. Black feathers covered its entire body, and its noble, crested head was covered with black feathers as well. This black flying creature appeared very noble. This was a Saint-level magical beast, the legendary ‘Hellfire Phoenix’!

Hellfire Phoenix – A darkness and fire dual-element Saint-level magical beast.

In mid-air, this Hellfire Phoenix covered the boundless skies like an enormous black cloud. The leader of the Fallen Angels, Cramerson, was standing on the back of the Hellfire Phoenix, staring coldly at Linley who was standing in mid-air.

“Roaaaaar.” A terrifying howl.

A massive black dragon with physical wings that was more than a hundred meters long flew over. The black colored dragon’s eyes burned like coals, and it emanated a suffocating aura of power. The Dark Patriarch, Affleck, was standing on the head of this Saint-level Black Dragon.

The Cult of Shadows had hidden two Saint-level magical beasts not too far away. Both of them had now shown themselves.

As for the Radiant Church, they had a Saint-level magical beast as well.

A beautiful silver light shone off its draconic scales which covered its entire body. Under the sun, this silver dragon seemed so beautiful and graceful. Amongst dragons, Silver Dragons were often praised as the most graceful and noble of dragons, and rightfully so. But this massive, hundred-meter-long Silver Dragon actually had two heads.

Mutant Saint-level magical beast – Saint-level Two-Headed Silver Dragon!

Lord Fallen Leaf's skinny body was standing atop the body of this Saint-level Two-Headed Silver Dragon.

"Wow." The sailors on the shore felt their hearts constrict tightly. Good Heavens. Three massive Saint-level magical beasts had appeared out of nowhere, and more importantly... there were so many people standing in mid-air as well.

These were all Saint-level combatants.

"So many Saints, and Saint-level magical beasts as well. Even if I die today, it will have been worth seeing this," a sailor stared in awe at the scene and mumbled to himself.

At this moment, the feeling these sailors had when they stared at these Saint-level experts and Saint-level magical beasts was the same feeling when Linley had when he had watched those two Saints fight when he was a child. In their eyes, these massive dragons and mighty Saints were far and high above them and above all mortals.

"Look. That's the Dragonblood Warrior, our Lord Linley." Many sailors saw the Dragonformed Linley. Their eyes were filled with worship as they stared at him, as well as a hint of pride. They were proud to be citizens of the Baruch Kingdom.

"Lord Linley seems to be about to engage in battle with those Saints. They have so many people." The sailors slowly began to come to their senses.

"Lord Linley will definitely win," a sailor said firmly, his eyes filled with veneration towards Linley.

In the air above Liuyan River, Linley, Barker, Zassler, and Bebe were floating there. Zassler was currently mumbling the words to a spell, and soon, three

illusionary flashes of light appeared behind Zassler, as three great Saint-level undead descended.

Two of them were skeletons, but their bones gleamed like diamonds while flashing with dazzling light. These were Saint-level Skeleton Kings! As for the other one, it was a powerful looking monstrosity dressed in a tattered long robe. It was a powerful Ancient Wight who had reached the Saint level.

The Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows weren't worried at all. Against these Saint-level undead, the ordinary Angel Saints and Fallen Angel Saints would be enough.

"Linley, all we want to do is preach. You can still rule over the Anarchic Lands. I hope that at this moment of no return, you'll reconsider." Although he said this, Heidens had already brought a precious treasure of the Radiant Sovereign to his hands; the 'Original Scripture' which the Lord had given them.

A soft, holy light appeared in front of Heidens.

"Reconsider my ass." Bebe knew exactly how Linley was feeling.

Unifying the Anarchic Lands was a small matter. Destroying the Radiant Church, that was what mattered.

"Stop dreaming. The Anarchic Lands belongs to me. Nobody is permitted to influence it. As for you..." Linley's empty hands curled into fists. "How about you roll back to your own domains. Otherwise... we'll talk with our fists!"

Heidens and Affleck couldn't help but be enraged.

An enraged bird cry came forth from the massive Hellfire Phoenix as well, and then it spoke in the human tongue. "You detestable human." And then, a bolt of pure black flame shot out towards Linley.

"Crackle crackle." The black flames surrounded Linley.

His body faintly covered with a layer of battle-qi, Linley wasn't damaged at all. Linley's dark golden eyes stared coldly and remorselessly at these people. "You attacked me first!" As he spoke, Linley suddenly moved at high speed.

After having Dragonformed, and with the assistance of his insights into the wind, Linley's speed was now far greater than Osenno's.

There wasn't even any wind sound to be heard. Space itself seemed to twist and distort, and Linley suddenly appeared next to the Hellfire Phoenix. The Hellfire Phoenix's cart-sized eyes immediately radiated thin threads of black light at Linley.

The leader of the Fallen Angels, Cramerson, suddenly moved his six black wings and charged straight for Linley.

"Haha..." Linley let out a loud laugh. Putting the terrifying power of the Dragonblood Warriors on full display, while combining them with his understanding of the Laws, Linley's power reached a transformative crescendo...

A soft wind seemed to gently waft past those black threads.

And then, Linley thrust his hands out like knives, using the incomparably massive strength of the Dragonblood Warriors to chop down at the Hellfire Phoenix. Although this blow carried enormous force, when Linley's hand swung down, the entire nearby space seemed to be locked while at the same time folding and distorting.

Linley was nothing more than a blur.

Knowing things weren't going well, the Hellfire Phoenix let out a few bird-cries of terror, while at the same time shrinking its body, vainly hoping to flee. Simultaneously, the Six-Winged Fallen Angel, Cramerson, let out an explosive shout as he pierced the black longsword in his hands towards Linley.

"Swish!"

Linley's speed was simply too fast, especially after transforming. The Hellfire Phoenix didn't have any chance to dodge, even after it shrank in size.

With a 'swish' sound, the Hellfire Phoenix, already down to a size of only ten meters, had its head directly split into two halves. A Saint-level magical beast died, just like that, after a single blow from the Dragonformed Linley.

This attack was the second level of the Tempos of the Wind technique, relying on the 'Slow' aspect's 'Spatial Freezing' concept and the 'Fast' aspect's 'Spatial Folding' concept, combined into one.

It was the most penetrative physical attack Linley currently was capable of.

“Swiiish.” Linley’s bladed palm swung right through the skull of the Hellfire Phoenix, and then, like steel claws, grabbed one side of the skull with each claw. The terrifying strength of the Dragonblood Warriors was put on full display as he suddenly, forcefully, ripped...

“SPLATTER!”

Blood blasted everywhere like rain, as the Hellfire Phoenix’s entire body was ripped into two halves, starting from that wound in its head.

“Swish!” The sword of the Six-Winged Fallen Angel, Cramerson, seemed to pierce through the void as it stabbed at Linley, but just as it was about to land on his body, the barely-visible ‘Pulseguard Defense’ around Linley’s body easily blocked the attack. This strike didn’t even touch Linley’s scales.

At this moment, Linley’s draconic claws were still holding onto half of the Hellfire Phoenix’s corpse, its blood still dripping down into the Liuyan River.

“What?!” Cramerson was shocked. His attack hadn’t even been able to break through the ‘Pulseguard Defense’.

Linley’s dark golden eyes swung towards Cramerson, his lips curving upwards. “The next one... is you!” As he spoke, Linley let the two halves of the Saint-level Hellfire Phoenix drop from his hands. “Splash!” The corpse landed in the turbid waters of the Liuyan River.

Downfall of Many Saints

The waters of Liuyan River roared. That massive corpse of the Hellfire Phoenix sank down into its waters, and the sailors above shuddered.

Raising their heads up, their eyes were filled with a certain feeling as they looked at the demonic, godlike Linley – invincible, mighty!

“Lord Linley is so powerful.” The sailors were filled with awe.

Right at this moment, because Linley had killed the Hellfire Phoenix, a vicious battle exploded. The Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows had begun to do battle with Linley!

“Rumble...” The frantic battle of so many Saints caused the flow of space itself to be disrupted. Wild, howling winds screamed everywhere, sand and rocks flew everywhere, and even the waters of Liuyan River rose in giant waves, as though stirred by a giant.

“What a terrifying Supreme Warrior.” Cramerson’s heart was terror-stricken. But then, a bestial roar. “Hoooooowl!”

The leader of the Fallen Angels, Cramerson, raised his head up and roared furiously, and as he did, magic runes appeared from his forehead. His entire body began to emit insidious cold flames, and the temperature around him seemed to have dropped dramatically. In particular, his body also became covered with dark golden shining scales. This was the legendary ‘Dark Saint Armor’, very similar to the earth spell’s ‘Earthguard Armor’.

“No matter how loud you shout, you’ll still die,” Linley’s calm voice drifted out.

Linley’s scale-covered right hand was balled into a tight fist, and it seemed to pass through space itself as it attacked. Whenever that fist passed... space itself rippled and folded over itself. Cramerson’s black longsword, covered in cold

flames, once more struck out, as fast as lightning.

The scale-covered fist and the cold, flaming black longsword intersected!

“Clang!”

A metallic ringing sound.

“Fallen Angels exist for battle. Do you think I’ll fear you?” Cramerson was full of confidence, but in an instant, Cramerson’s eyes, nose, lips, and ears all had blood pouring out, and his entire body collapsed from the heavens, powerless.

His body sank into the depths of the Liuyan River, and the river water carried it away.

Profound Truths of the Earth – 256 Layered Waves!

With one head-on clash, Cramerson’s internal organs had been shaken into mud.

“A Six-Winged Fallen Angel wants to fight with me in close quarters combat?” Linley’s dark golden eyes flashed with a hint of cold light. Linley was now a peak Dragonblood Warrior Saint. In physical strength and battle-qi alone, he was ten times stronger than ordinary Saints!

He had such a high foundation to begin with, and Linley’s ‘Profound Truths of the Earth’ and ‘Profound Truths of the Wind’ were both extremely powerful close-combat attacks as well.

When one’s base level of power and one’s mastery of the Laws both reached a very high level, the synthesis of the two would result in not even a person like Desri, someone who was very nearly at the Deity level, to willingly engage in close combat with a Dragonformed Linley. Fighting in close quarters combat with a Supreme Warrior who had such a high mastery of the laws was asking for death.

“Don’t fight with him in close quarters!” Heidens shouted out loudly.

“Linley’s attacks are very strange. Everyone, be careful,” Osenno called out as well. He was currently fighting with the transformed Undying Warrior Saint, Barker.

As for the Dark Patriarch Affleck and Senior Judge O’Casey, their faces had

both changed. The third pillar of their Cult, the leader of the Fallen Angels, Cramerson, had fallen, just like that. Standing atop the head of the Saint-level Black Dragon, Affleck's hands suddenly became filled with a black crystal ball.

Affleck's face was solemn, and his lips were moving slightly.

"Hrm?" Linley's face changed.

"What is that?" Linley could clearly sense an invisible, insidious cold energy penetrate his body. His 'Pulseguard Defense' didn't do anything against it at all, and that insidious force rapidly began to attack Linley's brain.

Darkness-style, forbidden-level spell – the Power of Evil!

This was a spell that the Dark Patriarch was only capable of utilizing with the assistance of their Cult's treasure, the crystal ball which had come from the Divine Plane of Darkness. Once the enemy was struck by this 'Power of Evil', for a short period of time, their body would be completely under the control of the spell user. The duration of the control was linked with the strength of the spiritual energy of the spell user.

If it was used against a Grand Magus Saint, it might not be able to control him, but it would be enough to make the Grand Magus Saint feel dizzy and be unable to react for a moment.

Within the depths of his mind.

That boundless ocean of spiritual energy swirled. The mysterious, seven-colored gem was hovering in the midst of it. When that surge of evil power swept into the consciousness and attacked that boundless ocean of spiritual energy, that faint layer of azure light in the spiritual energy immediately counteracted.

Dark Patriarch Affleck's eyes were cold, filled with a bizarre allure as he stared at Linley.

"Go. Kill that rat-type magical beast," Affleck said softly.

"Wait. O'Casey, go kill him, quick." Affleck's face suddenly changed. Affleck could clearly sense that Linley's spiritual energy was counter-attacking. Although Linley was still affected by the spell, the Power of Evil was not able to

brainwash Linley's soul at all.

O'Casey was wielding his two-meter-long 'Judge's Blade'. The Judge's Blade, covered with dark, cold light, moved in a strange rhythm as it chopped down towards Linley.

The Judge's Blade collided directly onto Linley's Pulseguard Defense.

In that moment...

"Bang!" Like a bubble being broken, the 'Pulseguard Defense', no longer being actively controlled by Linley due to the effects of the 'Power of Evil' spell, was actually split open. Only when the 'Pulseguard Defense' was being actively controlled by Linley was it capable of utilizing the 'Throbbing Pulse of the Earth' and be defensively powerful.

If the 'Pulseguard Defense' was not being controlled, it only had the simplest of vibrations and wasn't extremely powerful.

However...

Linley's draconic scales were different. No matter if Linley was conscious or not, the draconic scales were still draconic scales. A peak-stage Dragonblood Warrior Saint's scales were ridiculously defensive. In the past, the ancestors of the Baruch clan had relied on them to dominate the entire continent.

"Slash!" Like an ordinary knife chopping against marble, sparks flashed, but only a white scar appeared atop the draconic scales.

"One more chop will break through," O'Casey secretly said to himself. Just then, the Pulseguard Defense had cancelled out part of his attack. O'Casey's right hand turned into a blur, and the Judge's Blade once more came chopping down, aimed directly at the same location his earlier attack had landed.

"Crackle."

As though he had been set on fire, Linley's body suddenly once more became covered in deep azure battle-qi, and the battle-qi once more began to circulate in accordance with that mysterious, profound way. With a 'clang' sound, Linley's scale-covered hand suddenly grabbed the Judge's Blade.

Of course, there was still a thin layer of battle-qi between his hand and the

Judge's Blade.

"You lost your chance." Linley's dark golden eyes stared at O'Casey.

O'Casey's face changed dramatically. "Not good!" He didn't even have a chance to pull out his Judge's Blade, and he immediately retreated backwards at high speed. As he flew back, a strange violet light flashed through the place where O'casey had just been.

This was the Bloodviolet sword! O'Casey's back was covered with cold sweat. He had nearly been chopped in half.

Linley glanced at the disposition of the battle. Right now, Bebe was currently battling that mysterious 'Lord Fallen Leaf'. Bebe wasn't able to kill Lord Fallen Leaf at all.

In terms of understanding of the Laws of Light, the leader of the Ascetics, Lord Fallen Leaf, had the deepest understanding in the Church.

In particular, he knew how to transform his body into a line of light, then fly about at 'light speed'. He was far faster than Olivier had been in the past. Even Bebe, the fastest person on Linley's side, was only able to be on par with Lord Fallen Leaf.

"Bebe, stop wasting time with that old bastard. Go kill the Angels first," Linley immediately ordered Bebe.

"Got it, Boss." Bebe, too, had begun to feel that this old man was hard to deal with.

Fallen Leaf simply didn't engage Bebe in close quarters combat as well. He relied on his terrifying speed to move about, and then, like a spider, emit line after line of silken white light which contained a terrifying amount of flaming light power, constantly using it to entangle Bebe.

Although Bebe was fast, he wasn't able to use his speed to his advantage.

"Fighting with this old bastard is like falling into a pit of mud," Bebe secretly cursed.

"Fighting with this big bastard is nothing more than wasting time." Osenno felt resigned as well.

Barker, one of the Undying Warrior Saints famed for defense, totally ignored Osenno as he chased after those weaker Angels. Only occasionally would he launch a sudden surprise attack against Osenno. Osenno's Doppelganger Technique was simply too weird, after all. It was hard for Barker to harm Osenno as well.

But Osenno simply couldn't deal any damage to the Undying Warrior, Barker.

"Hrmph. It looks like I've turned into the weak link." Zassler laughed coldly as he watched a large number of Fallen Angels and Radiant Angels charge towards him.

Those three Saint-level undead weren't bad, but they weren't at the level of Haydson. They were only good for dealing with these Fallen Angels and Radiant Angels. However... how could a Grand Magus Necromancer be so easy to deal with? The Wraith Call ability was only part of the arsenal of a necromancer, after all.

"Die." The Fallen Angels and Radiant Angels' eyes were filled with cold light. They attacked at the same time.

Zassler stood in mid-air calmly, his lips mumbling. And then, an invisible ripple burst forth from Zassler, spreading out in all directions. This invisible ripple was quite similar to the one that Desri had used to attack Lehman, or which the Saint-level Gold Dragon had used to attack Linley.

The difference was, the area was clearly much larger.

The two closest Fallen Angels and Radiant Angel felt this invisible spiritual energy suddenly charge towards them. Their bodies immediately trembled.

"Pierce!" "Pierce!" "Pierce!"

At that instant, those three Saint-level undead attacked, and pierced straight through the hearts of the two Fallen Angels and the Radiant Angel, shattering the heart to pieces. Three of the Angels died, just like that. When adding this number to the two Linley had killed at the start and the three which Bebe had killed earlier... only a single Radiant Angel was left, while three Fallen Angels remained.

Only a single person was not engaged in battle. The Holy Emperor, Heidens.

Heidens was holding the Radiant Scriptures in his hands while chanting something. He had been chanting for a very long time... Linley felt a hint of worry in his heart.

“Desri and the others really are slow,” Linley muttered, while at the same time he used Bloodviolet to easily chop through a thick Icy Tentacle.

Actually, Linley had been waiting during this entire battle... because he had immediately instructed Haeru to ask Desri and the others to come. As for those three Saint-level dragons, they were hidden in the distance. Only at the most critical moment would those three Saint-level dragons join the battle.

But now...

“Roaaaaaar!” The furious roar seemed to split the heavens, and a flash of lightning pierced through the skies. With a ‘whap’ sound, a Fallen Angel that hadn’t managed to dodge in time was smashed into meat paste. Not even a Dragonformed Linley could match the Saint-level Thunder Lizard for speed, much less a Fallen Angel!

The attack of the Thunder Lizard wasn’t enough to do anything to Linley.

But to kill a Fallen Angel in one blow? More than enough.

“Big Brother, leave one for me!” A deep sound rang out, and the massive draconic tail of the Tyrant Wurm flashed, slapping the fleeing Radiant Angel into a meat paste. At this moment... the rest of the Fallen Angels died as well. It was the Thunder Lizard who had killed them.

It was simply too terrifyingly fast.

“Whoosh!” An invisible ripple suddenly attacked out of nowhere.

“Careful!” Lord Fallen Leaf called out in alarm, but it was too late. This invisible ripple quickly struck all four of Osenos, and Osenno’s dopplegangers immediately dissipated, leaving only one behind.

This attack was the ultimate attack of the Saint-level Gold Dragon – Soul Shout!

“Haha!” A loud laugh as the Undying Warrior Barker, his massive greataxe in hand, chopped straight down at Osenno. His soul dazed, Osenno was in the

midst of a nightmare and was totally unable to react.

“SLASH!”

Contrary to no one’s expectations, with a single chop of the greataxe, Osenno was split in half from the top of his skull.

At this time, Heidens finally finished chanting the words to his ultimate attack. His eyes became filled with a hint of coldness, and he pointed a finger at Linley as he gently said two words: “Life... Ripper!” An invisible surge of energy suddenly surrounded Linley.

Beirut

Necromantic Magic. Life Magic. Oracular Magic. All of them possessed their own mysteries.

The experts of the Four Higher Planes, however, knew very well that amongst the three, Oracular Magic was the most terrifying and most unpredictable. The reason for this was that its attacks were simply too bizarre. Oracular Magic, after all, came from the Overgod of Fate, one of the four Overgods.

The Laws of Fate were derived from the Overgod, and the Oracular Magic which he passed down was unimaginably profound and mysterious.

“Not good!” Desri, Hayward, and Higginson’s group had finally arrived, but they heard the words that Heidens had just spoken, “Life... Ripper!”

An invisible energy suddenly enveloped Linley, and Linley suddenly froze, completely unable to move any further. This invisible, bizarre force ignored all barriers, directly striking against Linley’s consciousness and his soul. The most important thing was one’s soul!

If a person died, their soul could enter the Netherworld and be reborn.

But if one’s soul was destroyed, then even a Sovereign wouldn’t be able to save them.

The vast sea of consciousness, where that rainbow-colored semi-translucent gem swirled while surrounded by that faint azure light possessed by the Dragonblood Warriors. This invisible force struck here, and the azure light immediately caved in.

The invisible force was depleting, but the azure light was depleting as well.

The power of Oracular Magic still depended on the practitioner. If a Deity-level practitioner had cast it, Linley wouldn’t have been able to resist at all.

“Bang.” The azure light could no longer endure, and it shattered.

The invisible force, despite being reduced in strength by more than half, still struck against Linley's soul. The sea of spiritual energy surrounding the rainbow-colored, semi-translucent gem simply couldn't resist the profound, obscure force of the Oracular Magic. Finally, the attack made its way to that semi-translucent gem.

Rumble!

A tremor from his very soul. Even Linley's body shuddered.

"Boss." Bebe turned frantic.

That rainbow-colored half-translucent gem also had a faint layer of azure light covering it. When the invisible force attacked the 'rainbow gem', nobody noticed... the Coiling Dragon ring on Linley's finger!

A dim, virtually unnoticeable stream of light flowed out of the Coiling Dragon ring, then vanished.

At the same moment...

It seemed as though the azure light covering the half-translucent gem suddenly received sufficient energy.

"Shudder..."

The azure light around the gem suddenly flashed. It was as though it had transformed into an azure sun in the midst of that sea of spiritual energy, and the azure light illuminated the entire sea. Beneath the glow of that azure sun, the force of the Oracular Magic, although still resisting for a while, slowly began to melt away like evaporating ice.

The azure light remained for a long time, but then it slowly faded away.

"How is that possible?!" Heidens' face instantly turned an ashen pale. He stared at Linley with shock. He had used all of his force on this ultimate attack, but he still hadn't been able to kill Linley. Linley hadn't reached the level of Grand Magus Saint yet! And it would be hard to say if even an ordinary Grand Magus Saint could take this blow.

And then, Heidens spied Desri's group coming from afar. He knew that things had just gotten worse. "They came as well!"

“Fallen Leaf, let’s go, quick.” Not hesitating at all, Heidens transformed into a ray of white light, immediately flying at high speed towards the west. The nearby Ascetic, Lord Fallen Leaf, also transformed into a beam of white light, flying westwards at high speed.

Both Desri and Bebe had their attention focused on Linley.

They didn’t have time to pay attention to Heidens or Fallen Leaf.

“Whew.” Linley let out a breath, then opened his eyes.

Although it took a long time to describe, in truth, the power of that Oracular Magic and its attack on Linley’s soul had only lasted for one or two seconds, but in those one or two seconds, Heidens and Fallen Leaf had disappeared into the western horizon. As for Affleck and O’Casey, they had fled with their magical beasts even before Heidens had fled.

“Boss, are you okay?” Bebe flew over, worried, his beady little eyes filled with fear.

Bebe was spiritually linked with Linley. Just then, he had sensed Linley’s soul shudder. It truly had been dangerous.

“Not bad. Not bad.” Linley was still filled with fear.

In his heart, Linley was puzzled as well. “Just then, I felt that the defensive energy which belonged to us Dragonblood Warriors was broken through by the Oracular Magic’s bizarre attack. But why was it that the defensive energy suddenly increased dramatically, easily breaking the Oracular Magic?”

Linley didn’t understand the reason.

But Linley knew very well that his soul had been shaken just then.

He knew... that just then, if he hadn’t been able to block the attack somehow, his soul probably would have shattered.

“Where’d they go?” Linley swept his gaze in the four directions, but Affleck, O’Casey, Heidens, and Fallen Leaf had fled far away. There was no way they could catch up now.

Desri flew over and said apologetically, “Linley, I came late. If you had been killed by Heidens’ Oracular Magic, I really would have...” Desri felt extremely

guilty. He knew exactly how terrifying Oracular Magic was.

“I was over-confident.” Linley smiled mockingly at himself.

Linley believed that his soul’s defense was very strong. With the protection of his draconic scales and his Pulseguard Defense, he had believed the enemy wouldn’t be able to do anything to him.

But just then, he had nearly lost his life.

Fortunately, at the last moment, within his soul, the protective energy belonging to the Dragonblood Warrior’s lineage had suddenly skyrocketed by over a hundredfold, dissolving even the fierce power of the Oracular Magic.

“Those four bastards ran quickly enough,” Bebe said furiously.

Barker nodded, then said in his loud voice, “Lord Linley, it seems to me that the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows isn’t all that remarkable. Osenno just died as well, and that Cramerson also died. Quite a few Angels died as well. Their force has dropped tremendously. As I see it, given our current strength, it shouldn’t be hard for us to slaughter our way to the Radiant Church now.”

“Right.” Zassler laughed insidiously. “Lord Linley, they’ve already broken our original agreement. There’s no need for you to hold to it any longer either.”

Linley was moved.

In the past, he had been bound by the agreement that he could only go seek revenge by himself. But now, since the other side had already broken the agreement, then he could go lead his group to slaughter a path to the Sacred Isle. It wouldn’t be too hard to destroy the Radiant Church.

“Linley,” Desri hurriedly said. “To be fair, their two sides have indeed gone too far, and you don’t need to follow the agreement any longer either. But I must try and warn you not to go attack the Sacred Isle of the Radiant Church.”

Linley frowned. “Mr. Desri, do you believe that in the future, if I led my little brother, Barker and his brothers, Bebe, Zassler, and the others... we wouldn’t be able to destroy the Sacred Isle? Right now, on the Sacred Isle, only Heidens, Fallen Leaf, and Lehman pose a threat.”

“That isn’t it.”

Desri shook his head. "You must understand, in the past, I belonged to the Radiant Church."

Linley listened.

Desri sighed. "The Radiant Church has endured for countless years. No matter what has happened or how great the waves or storms, the Radiant Church has never been destroyed. Do you know why?" Linley looked at Desri, puzzled.

Indeed. There had to be a reason why they had existed for such a long time.

"First of all, the Sacred Isle is definitely protected by the magical formation, 'Glory of the Radiant Sovereign'. Only someone with the power of a Deity can damage and destroy this formation," Desri said.

Linley suddenly remembered that in the past, when he had been in the City of Fenlai, he had been imprisoned in the Radiant Temple due to his attempt to kill the King of Fenlai. That Radiant Temple was protected by a magical formation called the 'Glory of the Radiant Sovereign'. Supposedly, even Saints wouldn't be able to break through the walls of the Radiant Temple as a result.

This was the effect of this magic formation.

Even a Deity like Dylin had to strike it twice to break through it.

One could imagine how powerful this defense was!

"This 'Glory of the Radiant Sovereign' isn't just a magical formation; if the people inside it actively control and operate it, it can transform into an attack upon its enemies." Desri sighed. "Linley, if you slaughter a path to the Sacred Isle, perhaps you will be able to kill many people on the Sacred Isle, but you definitely won't be able to kill the people hiding within the Radiant Temple."

Linley frowned.

This was true. When the Radiant Temple in Fenlai had been destroyed, he had been in the middle of the temple himself.

"Fine. They can hide on their little island, then." Linley could only come to this decision. In his heart, Linley secretly thought to himself, "When in the future, my Profound Truths of the Wind and Profound Truths of the Earth reach their limits, perhaps I can pay a visit to the Sacred Isle and test out the power of that

‘Glory of the Radiant Sovereign’ magic formation.”

Currently, Linley no longer feared the Radiant Church at all.

“Barker, make the arrangements to have the corpse of the Hellfire Phoenix processed. That Saint-level magicite core can’t go to waste.” Linley laughed.

“Yes, Lord.” Barker laughed as well.

No matter what, they had won this battle. Linley’s side had fought two sides, the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows, but in the end, they had won an absolute, dominating victory. Even Desri’s side hadn’t had to assist them.

This battle determined the final state of affairs in the Anarchic Lands.

The warriors of the Baruch Kingdom and the rat swarms, in their combined armies, appeared everywhere, and wherever they went, cities surrendered. Even some of the most die-hard adherents of the churches, under pressure from the rat swarms, collapsed and disappeared... and the Anarchic Lands became unified at an astonishing speed.

At the same time, the news of Linley’s battle with the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows quickly spread across the world.

This news was also intentionally spread by the Baruch Kingdom. Linley’s side had defeated two other sides at once. This caused Linley’s status in the Yulan continent to skyrocket yet again, totally eclipsing that of the Holy Emperor and the Dark Patriarch. His status was so high now that it was only lower than the War God and the High Priest.

The legend of Linley was sung throughout the Yulan continent.

As for the Anarchic Lands, countless people were filled with awe towards Linley. Many youths used Linley as their role model and began to train hard.



*

The Anarchic Lands. Baruch Kingdom. The royal palace.

Plumes of snow drifted from the skies. It was December now, and only a few days away from the Yulan festival. Linley, Delia, Zassler, Sasha, the other kids,

the Barker brothers, Rebecca, Leena, Jenne, and Wharton were all here.

Rebecca and Leena. Rebecca was the more playful one, and ten years ago, she had gotten married to the loud, rambunctious Gates. As for the quieter Leena, she had eventually married Barker. Of the five Barker brothers, the other three had eventually gotten married as well. Only Jenne continued to live with some of her close friends in the royal capital, but she herself remained single.

“That was too fast. How long has it been? The entire Anarchic Lands has been unified.” Wharton laughed.

“Naturally.” Taylor was very proud. “My father’s really awesome.”

Seeing how Taylor was acting, Linley began to laugh. Rubbing Taylor’s head, Linley looked at Wharton. “Wharton, remember. All religious proselytizing is to be forbidden. If you allow them to preach, in the future, your grandchildren won’t be able to manage the kingdom effectively.”

“I know. In recent days, quite a few religious believers have been causing trouble.” Wharton sighed.

Churches were a major threat to any kingdom. Now that Linley’s side had unified the entire Anarchic Lands, the Baruch Kingdom would most likely have to change its name to the Baruch Empire.

Although Linley himself didn’t care about imperial power, he had to make considerations for the descendants of his clan.

“Linley, Bebe.” The three Violet-Gold Rat Kings suddenly appeared in the main hall in a flash. The people present all looked at the three Violet-Gold Rat Kings, and the eldest amongst them, Harry, opened his mouth and said in the human tongue, “Linley, we’ve come to invite Bebe to make a trip with us to the Forest of Darkness.”

“Invite me?” Bebe was standing on the dinner table.

“Whose invitation?” Linley asked, puzzled.

“Our father,” the third rat king, Harvey, said proudly, “Is the King of the Forest of Darkness. The King of the entire Yulan continent, in fact. The most invincible, powerful person there is!” The three Violet-Gold Rat Kings were very proud.

The King of the Forest of Darkness? The King of the entire Yulan continent?

Linley felt secretly shocked, and wondered internally, “The King of the Forest of Darkness is the King of the entire Yulan continent? Can it be that he is even more powerful than the War God and the High Priest?”

Linley suddenly was moved and asked, “Might I ask, what is the name of your father?”

The second of the three Violet-Gold Rat Kings spoke this time: “Linley, you can refer to our father as... Lord Beirut!”

“Beirut!” Linley felt thunderclaps go off in his brain.

And Bebe, as well, stared at them, his eyes round as the moon.

For the rest of the Coiling Dragon Saga

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